DIALOGUES,

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AND

ESSAYS

Literary and Philoſophical.

Tranſlated from the FRENCH of

M. DE VOLTAIRE.

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Printed for ROBERT URIE,

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DIALOGUES,

AND

ESSAYS

Literary and Philoſophical.

A

DIALOGUES

BETWEEN

LUCRETIUS and POSSIDONIUS.

DIALOGUE I.

POSSIDONIUS.

YOUR poetry is ſometimes admirable; but the philoſophy of Epicurus is, in my opinion, very bad.

LUCRETIUS.

What! will you not allow that the atoms, of their own accord, diſpoſed themſelves in ſuch a manner as to produce the univerſe?

POSSIDONIUS.

We mathematicians can admit nothing but what is proved by inconteſtible principles.

LUCRETIUS.

My principles are ſo.

Ex nihilo nihil, in nihilum nil poſſe reverti.
Tangere enim et tangi niſi corpus nulla poteſt res.

From nothing nought can ſpring, to nothing nought return.

Nought but a body can a body touch.

POSSIDONIUS.

Should I grant you theſe principles, and even your atoms and your vacuum, you can no more perſuade me that the univerſe put itſelf into the admirable order in which we now behold it, than if you were to tell the Romans that the armillary ſphere compoſed by Poſſidonius made itſelf.

LUCRETIUS.

But who then could make the world?

POSSIDONIUS.

An intelligent Being, much more ſuperior to the world and to me, than I am to the braſs of which I made my ſphere.

LUCRETIUS.

How can you, who admit nothing but what is evident, acknowlege a principle of which you have not the leaſt idea?

POSSIDONIUS.

In the ſame manner as, before I knew you, I judged that your book was the work of a man of genius.

LUCRETIUS.

You allow that nature is eternal, and exiſts becauſe it does exiſt. Now if it exiſts by its

own power, why may it not, by the ſame power, have formed ſuns, and worlds, and plants, and animals, and men?

POSSIDONIUS.

All the ancient Philoſophers have ſuppoſed matter to be eternal, but have never proved it to be really ſo; and even allowing it to be eternal, it would by no means follow that it could form works in which there are ſo many ſtriking proofs of wiſdom and deſign. Suppoſe this ſtone to be eternal if you will, you can never perſuade me that it could have compoſed the Iliad of Homer.

LUCRETIUS.

No: a ſtone could never have compoſed the Iliad, any more than it could have produced a horſe: but matter organized in proceſs of time, and become bones, fleſh, and blood, will produce a horſe; and organized more finely, will produce the Iliad.

POSSIDONIUS.

You ſuppoſe all this without any proof; and I ought to admit nothing without proof. I will give you bones, fleſh, and blood, ready made, and will leave you and all the Epicureans in the world to make your beſt of them. Will you only conſent to this alternative; viz. to be put in poſſeſſion of the whole Roman em-

pire, if, with all the ingredients ready prepared, you produce a horſe, and to be hanged if you fail in the attempt?

LUCRETIUS

No; that ſurpaſſes my power, but not the power of nature. It requires millions of ages for nature, after having paſſed through all the poſſible forms, to arrive at laſt at the only one which can produce living beings.

POSSIDONIUS.

You might, if you pleaſed, continue all your life-time to ſhake in a caſk all the materials of the earth mixed together; you would never be able to form any regular figure; you could produce nothing. If the length of your life is not ſufficient to produce even a muſhroom, will the length of another man's life be ſufficient for that purpoſe? Why ſhould ſeveral ages be able to effect what one age has not effected? One ought to have ſeen men and animals ſpring from the boſom of the earth, and corn produced without ſeed, etc. before he ſhould venture to affirm that matter, by its own energy, could gave itſelf ſuch forms; but no one that I know of hath ſeen ſuch an operation, and therefore no one ought to believe it.

LUCRETIUS.

Well! men, animals, and trees muſt always have exiſted. All the philoſophers allow that matter is eternal; and they muſt further allow, that generations are ſo likewiſe. It is the very nature of matter that there ſhould be ſtars that revolve, birds that fly, horſes that run, and men that compoſe Iliads.

POSSIDONIUS.

In this new ſuppoſition you change your opinion; but you always ſuppoſe the point in queſtion, and admit a thing for which you have not the leaſt proof.

LUCRETIUS.

I am at liberty, to believe, that what is today, was yeſterday, was a century ago, was an hundred centuries ago, and ſo on backwards without end. I make uſe of your argument: no one has ever ſeen the ſun or ſtars begin their courſe, nor the firſt animals formed and endowed with life. We may, therefore, ſafely believe that all things were from eternity as they are at preſent.

POSSIDONIUS

There is a very great difference. I ſee an admirable deſign, and I ought to believe that an intelligent Being formed that deſign.

LUCRETIUS.

You ought not to admit a being of whom you have no knowlege.

POSSIDONIUS.

You might as well tell me, that I ought not to believe, that an architect built the capitol, becauſe I never ſaw that architect.

LUCRETIUS.

Your compariſon is not juſt. You have ſeen houſes built, and you have ſeen architects; and therefore you ought to couclude that it was a man like our preſent architects that built the capitol. But here the caſe is very different; the capitol does not exiſt of itſelf, but matter does. It muſt neceſſarily have had ſome form; and why will you not allow it to poſſeſs, by its own energy, the form in which it now is? Is it not much eaſier for you to admit, that nature modifies itſelf, than to acknowlege a being that modifies it? In the former caſe you have only one difficulty to encounter, namely, to comprehend how nature acts. In the latter you have two difficulties to ſurmount, viz. to comprehend this ſame nature, and the viſible being that acts upon it.

POSSIDONIUS.

It is quite the reverſe. I ſee not only a

difficulty, but even an impoſſibility in comprehending how matter can have infinite deſigns; but I ſee no difficulty in admitting an intelligent being, who governs this matter by his infinite wiſdom, and by his almighty will.

LUCRETIUS.

What? is it becauſe your mind cannot comprehend one thing that you are to ſuppoſe another? Is it becauſe you do not underſtand the ſecret ſprings, and admirable contrivances, by which nature diſpoſed itſelf into planets, ſuns, and animals, that you have recourſe to another being?

POSSIDONIUS.

No; I have not recourſe to a God, becauſe I cannot comprehend nature; but I plainly perceive that nature needs a ſupreme intelligence; and this reaſon alone would to me be a ſufficient proof of a deity, had I no other.

LUCRETIUS.

And what if this matter poſſeſſed intelligence of itſelf?

POSSIDONIUS.

It is plain to me that it does not poſſeſs it.

LUCRETIUS.

And to me it is plain that it does poſſeſs it, ſince I ſee bodies like you and me reaſon.

POSSIDONIUS.

If matter poſſeſſes, of itſelf, the faculty of thinking, you muſt affirm that it poſſeſſes it neceſſarily and independently: but if this property be eſſential to matter, it muſt have it at all times and in all places; for whatever is eſſential to a thing can never be ſeparated from it. A bit of clay, and even the vileſt excrement would think; but ſure you will not ſay that dung thinks. Thought, therefore, is not an eſſential attribute of matter.

LUCRETIUS.

Your reaſoning is a mere ſophiſm. I hold motion to be eſſential to matter; and yet this dung, or that piece of clay, are not actually in motion; but they will be ſo when they are impelled by ſome other body. In like manner thought will not be an attribute of a body, except when that body is organized for thinking.

POSSIDONIUS.

Your error proceeds from this, that you always ſuppoſe the point in queſtion. You do not reflect, that, in order to organize a body, to make it a man, to render it a thinking being, there muſt previouſly be thought, there muſt be a fixed deſign. But you cannot admit ſuch a thing as deſign, before the only be-

ings in this world, capable of deſign, are formed; you cannot admit thought, before the only beings, capable of thinking, exiſt. You likewiſe ſuppoſe the point in queſtion, when you ſay that motion is neceſſary to matter; for what is abſolutely neceſſary always exiſts, as extenſion, for inſtance, exiſts always and in every part of matter; but motion does not exiſt always. The pyramids of Egypt are not ſurely in motion. A ſubtile matter, perhaps, may penetrate between the ſtones which compoſe the pyramids; but the body of the pyramid is immoveable. Motion, therefore, is not eſſential to matter, but is communicated to it by a foreign cauſe, in the ſame manner as thought is to men. Hence it follows, that there muſt be a powerful and intelligent being, who communicates motion and thought to his creatures.

LUCRETIUS.

I can eaſily anſwer your objections, by ſaying, that there have always been motion and intelligence in the world. This motion and this intelligence have been diſtributed at all times, according to the laws of nature. Matter being eternal, it muſt neceſſarily have been in ſome order; but it could not be put into any order without thought and motion; and

therefore thought and motion muſt have always been inherent in it.

POSSIDONIUS.

Do what you will, you can at beſt but make ſuppoſitions. You ſuppoſe an order; there muſt therefore have been ſome intelligent mind who formed this order. You ſuppoſe motion and thought before matter was in motion, and before there were men and thoughts. You muſt allow, that thought is not eſſential to matter, ſince you dare not ſay that flint thinks. You can oppoſe nothing but a *perhaps* to the truth that preſſes hard upon you. You are ſenſible of the weakneſs of matter, and are forced to admit a ſupreme intelligent and almighty being, who organized matter and thinking beings. The deſigns of this ſuperior intelligence ſhine forth in every part of nature, and you muſt perceive them as diſtinctly in a blade of graſs, as in the courſe of the ſtars. Every thing is evidently directed to a certain end.

LUCRETIUS.

But do you not take for a deſign what is only a neceſſary exiſtence? Do you not take for an end what is no more than the uſe which we make of things that exiſt? The Argonautes built a ſhip to ſail to Colchis. Will you

ſay that the trees were created in order that the Argonauts might build a ſhip, and that the ſea was made to enable them to undertake their voyage? Men wear ſtockings; will you ſay that legs were made by the ſupreme being in order to be covered with ſtockings? No, doubtleſs; but the Argonautes, having ſeen wood, built a ſhip with it, and having learned that the water could carry a ſhip, they undertook their voyage. In the ſame manner, after an infinite number of forms and combinations which matter had aſſumed, it was found that the humours, and the tranſparent horn which compoſe the eye, and which were formerly ſeparated in different parts of the body, were united in the head, and animals began to ſee. The organs of generation, diſperſed before, were likewiſe collected, and took the form they now have; and then all kinds of procreation were conducted with regularity. The matter of the ſun, which had been long diffuſed and ſcattered through the univerſe, was conglobated, and formed the luminary that enlightens our world. Is there any thing impoſſible in all this?

POSSIDONIUS.

In fact, you cannot ſurely be ſerious when you have recourſe to ſuch a ſyſtem: for, in the firſt place, if you adopt this hypotheſis,

you muſt of courſe reject the eternal generations of which you have juſt now been talking: and, in the ſecond place, you are miſtaken with regard to final cauſes. There are voluntary uſes to which we apply the gifts of nature; and there are likewiſe neceſſary effects. The Argonautes needed not, unleſs they had pleaſed, have employed the trees of the foreſt to build a ſhip; but theſe trees were plainly deſtined to grow on the earth, and to produce fruits and leaves. We need not cover our legs with ſtockings; but the leg was evidently made to ſupport the body, and to walk, the eyes to ſee, and the ears to hear, and the parts of generation to perpetuate the ſpecies. If you conſider that a ſtar, placed at the diſtance of four or five hundred millions of leagues from us, ſends forth rays of light, which make preciſely the ſame angle in the eyes of every animal, and that, at that inſtant, all animals have the ſenſation of light, you muſt acknowlege that this is an inſtance of the moſt admirable mechaniſm and deſign. But is it not unreaſonable to admit mechaniſm without a mechanic, a deſign without intelligence, and ſuch deſigns without a Supreme Being?

LUCRETIUS.

If I admit the Supreme Being, what form muſt I give him? Is he in one place? Is he

out of all place? Is he in time or out of time? Does he fill the whole of ſpace, or does he not fill it? Why did he make the world? What was his end in making it? Why moral and natural evil? On whatever ſide I turn my mind, every thing appears dark and incomprehenſible.

POSSIDONIUS.

It is a neceſſary conſequence of the exiſtence of this Supreme Being that his nature ſhould be incomprehenſible; for, if he exiſts, there muſt be an infinite diſtance between him and us. We ought to believe that he is, without endeavouring to know what he is, or how he operates. Are you not obliged to admit aſymptotes in geometry, without comprehending how it is poſſible for the ſame lines to be always approaching, and yet never to meet? Are there not many things as incomprehenſible as demonſtrable, in the properties of the circle? Confeſs, therefore, that you ought to admit what is incomprehenſible, when the exiſtence of that incomprehenſible is proved.

LUCRETIUS.

What! muſt I renounce the dogmas of Epicurus?

POSSIDONIUS.

It is better to renounce Epicurus, than to abandon the dictates of reaſon.

DIALOGUE II.

LUCRETIUS.

I Begin to recognize a Supreme Being, inacceſſible to our ſenſes, and proved by our reaſon, who made the world, and preſerves it; but with regard to what I have ſaid of the ſoul, in my third book, which has been ſo much admired by all the learned men of Rome, I hardly think you can oblige me to alter my opinion.

POSSIDONIUS.

You ſay,

Idque ſitum media regione in pectoris hæret.

The mind is in the middle of the breaſt.

But, when you compoſed your beautiful verſes, did you never make any effort of the head? When you ſpeak of the orators Cicero and Mark Antony, do you not ſay that they had good heads? And were you to ſay that they had good breaſts, would not people imagine that you was talking of their voice and lungs?

LUCRETIUS.

Are you not convinced, from experience,

that the feelings of joy, of ſorrow, and of fear, are formed about the heart?

Hic exultat enim pavor ac metus; hæc loca
Lætitiæ mulcent. [*circum*

For there our paſſions live, our joy, our fear,
And hope. CREECH.

Do you not feel your heart dilate or contract itſelf on the hearing of good or bad news? Is it not poſſeſſed of ſome ſecret ſprings of a yielding and elaſtic quality? This, therefore, muſt be the ſeat of the ſoul.

POSSIDONIUS.

There are two nerves which proceed from the brain, paſs through the heart and ſtomach, reach to the parts of generation, and communicate motion to them; but would you therefore ſay, that the human mind reſides in the parts of generation?

LUCRETIUS.

No; I dare not ſay ſo. But though I ſhould place the ſoul in the head, inſtead of placing it in the breaſt, my principles will ſtill ſubſiſt: the ſoul will ſtill be an infinitely ſubtile matter, reſembling the elementary fire, that animates the whole machine.

POSSIDONIUS.

And why do you imagine that a ſubtile mat-

ter can have thoughts and ſentiments of itſelf?

LUCRETIUS.

Becauſe I experience it; becauſe all the parts of my body, when touched, preſently feel the impreſſion; becauſe this feeling is diffuſed through my whole machine; becauſe it could not be diffuſed through it but by a matter of a very ſubtile nature, and of a very rapid motion; becauſe I am a body, and one body cannot be affected but by another; becauſe the interior part of my body could not be penetrated but by corpuſcles; and, of conſequence, my ſoul muſt be an aſſemblage of theſe corpuſcles.

POSSIDONIUS.

We have already agreed, in our firſt converſation, that it is extremely improbable that a rock could compoſe the Iliad. Will a ray of the ſun be more capable of compoſing it? Suppoſe this ray an hundred thouſand times more ſubtile and rapid than uſual, will this light, or this tenuity of parts, produce thoughts and ſentiments.

LUCRETIUS.

Perhaps they may, when placed in organs properly prepared.

POSSIDONIUS.

You are perpetually reduced to your *perhaps*. Fire, of itſelf, is no more capable of thinking than ice. Should I ſuppoſe that it is fire that thinks, perceives, and wills in you, you would then be forced to acknowlege, that it is not by its own virtue that it hath either will, thought, or perception.

LUCRETIUS.

No; theſe ſenſations will be produced not by its own virtue, but by the aſſemblage of the fire, and my organs.

POSSIDONIUS.

How can you imagine that two bodies, neither of which can think apart, ſhould be able to produce thought when joined together?

LUCRETIUS.

In the ſame manner as a tree and earth, when taken ſeparately, do not produce fruit; but do ſo, when the tree is planted in the earth.

POSSIDONIUS.

The compariſon is only ſpecious. This tree hath in it the ſeeds of fruit: we plainly perceive them in the buds, and the moiſture of the earth unfolds the ſubſtance of theſe fruits. Fire, therefore, muſt poſſeſs in itſelf

the ſeeds of thought, and the organs of the body ſerve only to develope theſe ſeeds.

LUCRETIUS.

And do you find any thing impoſſible in this?

POSSIDONIUS.

I find that this fire, this highly refined matter, is as devoid of the faculty of thinking as a ſtone. The production of a being muſt have ſomething ſimilar to that which produced it; but thought, will, and perception, have nothing ſimilar to fiery matter.

LUCRETIUS.

Two bodies, ſtruck againſt each other, produce motion, and yet this motion has nothing ſimilar to the two bodies; it has none of their three dimenſions, nor has it any figure. A being, therefore, may have nothing ſimilar to that which produced it; and, of conſequence, thought may ſpring from an aſſemblage of two bodies which have no thought.

POSSIDONIUS.

This compariſon likewiſe is more ſpecious than juſt. I ſee nothing but matter in two bodies in motion: I only ſee bodies paſſing from one place to another. But when we reaſon together, I ſee no matter in your ideas, or in my own. I ſhall only obſerve, that I can no more conceive how one body has the

power of moving another, than I can comprehend the manner of my having ideas. To me, both are equally inexplicable; and both equally prove the existence and the power of a Supreme Being, the author of thought and motion.

LUCRETIUS.

If our soul is not a subtile fire, an ethereal quintessence, what is it?

POSSIDONIUS.

Neither you nor I know aught of the matter. I will tell you plainly what it is not; but I cannot tell you what it actually is. I see that it is a power lodged in my body; that I did not give my self this power; and, of consequence, that it must have come from a Being superior to myself.

LUCRETIUS.

You did not give yourself life; you received it from your father; from whom likewise, together with life, you received the faculty of thinking, as he had received both from his father, and so on backwards to infinity. You no more know the true principles of life, than you do that of thought. This succession of living and thinking beings hath always existed.

POSSIDONIUS.

I plainly see, that you are always obliged

to abandon the ſyſtem of Epicurus; and that you dare no longer maintain, that the declination of atoms produced thought. I have already, in our laſt converſation, refuted the eternal ſucceſſion of ſenſible and thinking beings. I ſhewed you, that, if there were material beings capable of thinking by their own power, thought muſt neceſſarily be an attribute eſſential to all matter; that, if matter thought neceſſarily, and by its own virtue, all matter muſt of courſe think: but this is not the caſe, and therefore it is impoſſible to maintain a ſucceſſion of material beings, who, of themſelves, poſſeſs the faculty of thinking.

LUCRETIUS.

Notwithſtanding this reaſoning, which you repeat, it is certain that a father communicates a ſoul to his ſon, at the ſame time that he forms his body. This ſoul and this body grow together; they gradually acquire ſtrength; they are ſubject to calamities, and to the infirmities of old age. The decay of our ſtrength draws along with it that of our judgement; the effect, at laſt, ceaſes with the cauſe, and the ſoul vaniſhes like ſmoke into the air.

Præterea, gigni pariter cum corpore, et una
Creſcere ſentimus, pariterque ſeneſcere mentem.

Nam velet infirmo pueri, teneroque vagantur
Corpore, ſic animi ſequitur ſententia tenuis.
Inde ubi robuſtis adolevit viribus ætas,
Conſilium quoque majus, et auctior eſt animi vis.
Poſt ubi jam validis quaſſatum eſt viribus ævi
Corpus, et obtuſis ceciderunt viribus artus:
Claudicat ingenium, delirat linguaque, menſque;
Omnia deficiunt, atque una tempore deſunt:
Ergo diſſolvi quoque convenit omnem animai
Naturam, ceu fumus in altas aeris auras:
Quandoquidem gigni pariter, pariterque videmus
Creſcere, et (ut docui) ſimul ævo feſſa fatiſcit.

Beſides, 'tis plain that ſouls are born, and grow;
And all by age decay, as bodies do;
To prove this truth; in infants, minds appear
Infirm, and tender as their bodies are:
In man, the mind is ſtrong; when age prevails,
And the quick vigour of each member fails,
The mind's pow'rs too decreaſe and waſte apace,
And grave and rev'rend folly takes the place.
'Tis likely then the ſoul and mind muſt die;
Like ſmoke in air, its ſcatter'd atoms fly:
Since all theſe proofs have ſhewn, theſe reaſons told,
'Tis with the body born, grows ſtrong, and old.

CREECH.

POSSIDONIUS.

Theſe, to be ſure, are very fine verſes; but do you thereby inform me of the nature of the ſoul?

LUCRETIUS.

No; I only give you its hiſtory, and I reaſon with probability,

POSSIDONIUS.

Where is the probability of a father's communicating to his ſon the faculty of thinking?

LUCRETIUS.

Do you not daily ſee children reſembling their fathers in their inclinations, as well as in their features?

POSSIDONIUS.

But does not a father, in begetting his ſon, act as a blind agent? Does he pretend, when he enjoys his wife, to make a ſoul, or to make thoughts? Do either of them know the manner in which a child is formed in the mother's womb? Muſt we not, in this caſe, have recourſe to a ſuperior cauſe, as well as in all the other operations of nature which we have examined? Muſt you not ſee, if you are in earneſt, that men give themſelves nothing, but are under the hand of an abſolute maſter?

LUCRETIUS.

If you know more of the matter than I do, tell me what the ſoul is.

POSSIDONIUS.

I do not pretend to know what it is more than you. Let us endeavour to enlighten each other. Tell me, firſt, what is vegetation?

LUCRETIUS.

It is an eternal motion, that carries the moiſture of the earth into plants, makes them grow, unfolds their fruits, expands their leaves, *etc.*

POSSIDONIUS.

Surely, you do not think that there is a being called *Vegetation* that performs theſe wonders!

LUCRETIUS.

Who ever thought ſo?

POSSIDONIUS.

From our former diſcourſe you ought to conclude, that the tree did not give vegetation to itſelf.

LUCRETIUS.

I am forced to allow it.

POSSIDONIUS.

Tell me next what life is?

LUCRETIUS.

It is vegetation joined with perception in an organized body.

POSSIDONIUS.

And is there not a being called life that gives perception to an organized body?

LUCRETIUS.

Doubtleſs, vegetation and life are words which ſignify things that live and vegetate.

POSSIDONIUS.

If a tree and an animal cannot give themſelves life and vegetation, can you give yourſelf thoughts?

LUCRETIUS.

I think I can; for I think of whatever I pleaſe. My intention was to converſe with you about metaphyſics, and I have done ſo.

POSSIDONIUS.

You think that you are maſter of your ideas: do you know what thoughts you will have in an hour, or in a quarter of an hour?

LUCRETIUS.

I muſt own that I do not.

POSSIDONIUS

You frequently have ideas in your ſleep; you make verſes in a dream: Caeſar takes cities; I reſolve problems; and hounds purſue the ſtag in their dreams. Ideas, therefore, come to us independently of our own will: they are given us by a Superior Being.

LUCRETIUS.

In what manner do you mean? Do you

ſuppoſe that the Supreme Being is continually employed in communicating ideas; or that he created incorporeal ſubſtances, which were afterwards capable of forming ideas of themſelves, ſometimes with the aſſiſtance of the ſenſes, and ſometimes without it? Are theſe ſubſtances formed at the moment of the animal's conception? or are they formed before its conception? Do they wait for bodies, in order to inſinuate themſelves into them? or are they not lodged there till the animal is capable of receiving them? Or, in fine, is it in the Supreme Being that every animated being ſees the ideas of things? What is your opinion?

POSSIDONIUS.

When you tell me how our will produces an inſtantaneous motion in our bodies, how your arm obeys your will, how we receive life, how food digeſts in the ſtomach, and how corn is transformed into blood, I will then tell you how we have ideas. With regard to all theſe particulars, I frankly confeſs my ignorance. The world, perhaps, may one day obtain new lights; but from the time of Thales to the preſent age, we have not had any. All we can do is to be ſenſible of our own weakneſs, to acknowledge an Almighty Being, and to be upon our guard againſt theſe ſyſtems.

DIALOGUE III.

BETWEEN

A SAVAGE and a BATCHELOR of ARTS.

A Governor of Cayenne, having brought over with him a Savage from Guiana, who had a great ſhare of good natural underſtanding, and ſpoke French tolerably well; a Batchelor of Arts at Paris had the honour of entering into the following converſation with him.

BATCHELOR.

I ſuppoſe, Mr. Savage, you have ſeen a number of your country people who paſs their lives all alone; for it is ſaid that this is the true way of living natural to man, and that ſociety is only an artificial depravity.

SAVAGE.

Indeed I never did ſee any of thoſe people

you ſpeak of. Man appears to me to be born for ſociety, as well as ſeveral other ſpecies of animals. Each ſpecies follows the dictates of their nature; as for us, we live all together in a community.

BATCHELOR.

How! in community? Why then you have fine towns, and cities with walls, and kings who keep a court. You have ſhows, convents, univerſities, libraries, and taverns, have you?

SAVAGE.

No; but have I not frequently heard it ſaid, that in your continent you have Arabians, Scythians, who never knew any thing of theſe matters, and yet form conſiderable nations? Now we live like theſe people; neighbouring families aſſiſt each other. We inhabit a warm climate, and ſo have very few neceſſities; we can eaſily procure ourſelves food; we marry; we get children; we bring them up, and then we die. You ſee this is juſt the ſame as amongſt you; ſome few ceremonies excepted.

BATCHELOR.

Why, my good Sir, then you are not a ſavage?

SAVAGE.

I do not know what you mean by that word.

BATCHELOR.

Nor, to tell you the truth, do I myſelf. —Stay—let me conſider a little—Oh!—a ſavage!—Why—a ſavage is—what we call a ſavage, is a man of a moroſe unſociable diſpoſition, who flies all company.

SAVAGE.

I have told you already that we live together in families.

BATCHELOR.

We alſo give the name of Savage, to thoſe beaſts who are not tamed, but roam wild about the foreſt; and from hence we have transferred that appellation to men who inhabit the woods.

SAVAGE.

I go into the woods ſometimes, as well as you, to hunt.

BATCHELOR.

Pray now, do you think ſometimes.

SAVAGE.

It is impoſſible to be without ſome ſort of ideas.

BATCHELOR.

I have a great curioſity to know what your ideas are. What think you of man?

C

SAVAGE.

Think of him! Why, that he is a two-footed animal, who has the faculty of reaſoning, ſpeaking, and who uſes his hands much more dexterouſly than the monkey. I have ſeen ſeveral kinds of men, ſome white like you, others copper-coloured, like me, and others black, like thoſe that wait upon the governor of Cayenne. You have a beard, we have none; the negroes have wool, you and I have hair. They ſay, that in your more northerly climates the inhabitants have white hair, whereas that of the Americans is black. This is all I know about man.

BATCHELOR.

But your ſoul, my dear Sir? your ſoul? what notion have you of that? whence comes it? what is it? what does it do? how does it act? where does it go?

SAVAGE.

I know nothing about all this, indeed; for I never ſaw the ſoul.

BATCHELOR.

Apropos; do you think that brutes are machines?

SAVAGE.

They appear to me to be organized machines, that have ſentiment and memory.

BATCHELOR.

Well; and pray now, Mr. Savage, what do you think that you, you yourſelf, I ſay, poſſeſs above theſe brutes;

SAVAGE.

The gifts of an infinitely ſuperior memory; a much greater ſhare of ideas, and, as I have already told you, a tongue capable of forming many more ſounds than that of brutes; with hands more ready at executing; and the faculty of laughing, which a long-winded argumentator always makes me exerciſe.

BATCHELOR.

But tell me, if you pleaſe, how came you by all this? what is the nature of your mind? how does your ſoul animate your body? do you always think? is your will free?

SAVAGE.

Here are a great number of queſtions; you aſk me, How I came to poſſeſs what God has given to man? You might as well tell me how I was born? For certainly, ſince I am born a man, I muſt poſſeſs the things that conſtitute a man, in the ſame manner as a tree has its bark, roots, and leaves. You would have me to know what is the nature of my mind. I did not give it to myſelf, and therefore I cannot know what it is; and as to how my

ſoul animates my body, I am as much a ſtranger to that too; and, in my opinion, you muſt firſt have ſeen the ſprings that put your watch in motion before you can tell how it ſhows the hour. You aſk me if I always think? No, for ſometimes I have half-formed ideas, in the ſame manner as I ſee objects at a diſtance, confuſedly; ſometimes my ideas are much ſtronger, as I can diſtinguiſh an object better when it is nearer to me; ſometimes I have no ideas at all, as when I ſhut my eyes I can ſee nothing. Laſtly, you aſk me, if my will is free? Here I do not underſtand you; theſe are things you are perfectly well acquainted with, no doubt; therefore I ſhall be glad you will explain them to me.

BATCHELOR.

Yes, yes, I have ſtudied all theſe matters thoroughly; I could talk to you about them for a month together without ceaſing, in ſuch a manner as would ſurpaſs your underſtanding. But tell me, do you know good and evil, right and wrong? do you know which is the beſt form of government,? which the beſt worſhip? what is the law of nations? the common law? the civil law? the canon law? Do you know the names of the firſt man and woman who peopled America? Do you know

the reaſon why rain falls into the ſea; and why you have no beard?

SAVAGE.

Upon my word, Sir, you take rather too great advantage of the confeſſion I made juſt now, that man has a ſuperior memory to the brutes; for I can hardly recollect the many queſtions you have aſked me: you talk of good and evil; right and wrong. Now I think that whatever gives you pleaſure, and does injury to no man, is very good and very right; that what injures our fellow creatures, and gives us no pleaſure, is abominable; and what gives us pleaſure, but, at the ſame time, hurts others, may be good with reſpect to us for the time; but is it in itſelf both dangerous to us, and very wrong with regard to others.

BATCHELOR.

And do you live in ſociety with theſe maxims?

SAVAGE.

Yes, with our relations and neighbours; and without much pain and vexation, we quietly attain our hundredth year; ſome indeed reach to an hundred and twenty; after which our bodies ſerve to fertilize the earth that has nouriſhed us.

BATCHELOR.

You ſeem to me to have a clear underſtanding; I would very fain puzzle it. Let us dine together, after which we will philoſophize methodically.

DIALOGUE IV.

SAVAGE.

I Find that I have ſwallowed foods that are not made for me; notwithſtanding I have a good ſtomach, you have made me eat after my hunger was ſatisfied, and drink when I was no longer dry. My legs are not ſo firm under me as they were before dinner; my head feels heavy, and my ideas are confuſed. I never felt this diminution of my faculties in my own country. For my part, I think the more a man puts into his body here, the more he takes away from his underſtanding. Pray tell me, what is the reaſon of all this damage and diſorder?

BATCHELOR.

I will tell you. In the firſt place, as to what paſſes in your legs, I know nothing about the matter; you muſt conſult the phyſicians about that; they will ſatisfy you in a

trice. But I am perfectly well acquainted with how things go in your head. You must know then, that the soul being confined to no place, has fixed her seat either in the pineal gland, or the callous body in the middle of the brain. The animal spirits that rise from the stomach fly up to the soul, which they cannot affect, they being matter, and she immaterial. Now, as neither can act upon the other, therefore the soul takes their impression; and, as she is a simple principle, and consequently subject to no change, therefore she suffers a change, and becomes heavy and dull when we eat too much; and this is the reason that so many great men sleep after dinner.

SAVAGE.

What you tell me appears very ingenious and profound; but I should take it as a favour if you would explain it to me in such a manner as I might comprehend.

BATCHELOR.

Why, I have told you every thing that can be said upon this weighty affair; but, to satisfy you, will be a little more explicit. Let us go step by step. First, then, do you know that this is the best of all possible worlds?

SAVAGE.

How! is it impossible for the infinite Being

to create any thing better than what we now ſee?

BATCHELOR.

Undoubtedly; for nothing can be better than what we ſee. It is true, indeed, that mankind rob and murder each other; but they all the while extol equity and moderation. Several years ago they maſſacred about twelve millions of your Americans; but then it was to make the reſt more reaſonable. A famous calculator has proved, that from a certain war of Troy, which you know nothing of, to the laſt war in North America, which you do know ſomething of, there have been killed in pitched battles no leſs that 555,650,000 men, without reckoning young children and women buried under the ruins of cities and towns which have been ſet on fire; but this was all for the good of the community: four or five thouſand dreadful maladies, to which mankind are ſubject, teach us the true value of health; and the crimes that cover the face of the earth, greatly enhance the merit of religious men, of which I am one. You ſee that every thing goes in the beſt manner poſſible, at leaſt as to me.

Now things could never be in this ſtate of perfection, if the ſoul was not placed in the

pineal gland. For——But let me take you along with me in the argument. Let us go ſtep by ſtep. What notion have you of laws, and of the rule of right and wrong; of the *to Kalon*, as Plato calls it?

SAVAGE.

Well, but my good Sir, while you talk of going ſtep by ſtep, you ſpeak to me of an hundred different things at a time.

BATCHELOR.

Every one converſes in this manner. But tell me who made the laws in your country?

SAVAGE.

The public good.

BATCHELOR.

That word *public good*, means a great deal. We have not any ſo expreſſive; pray, in what ſenſe do you underſtand it?

SAVAGE.

I underſtand by it, that thoſe who have a plantation of cocoa trees or maize, have forbidden others to meddle with them; and that thoſe who have them not are obliged to work, in order to have a right to eat part of them. Every thing that I have ſeen, either in your country or my own, teaches me that there can be no other ſpirit of the laws.

BATCHELOR.

But as to women, Mr. Savage, women?

SAVAGE.

As to women, they pleaſe me when they are handſome and ſweet-tempered: I prize them even before our cocoa-trees; they are a fruit which we are not willing to have plucked by any but ourſelves. A man has no more right to take my wife from me than to take my child. However, I have heard it ſaid, that there are people who will ſuffer this; they have it certainly in their will; every one may do what he pleaſes with his own property.

BATCHELOR.

But as to ſucceſſors, legatees, heirs, and collateral kindred?

SAVAGE.

Every one muſt have a ſucceſſor. I can no longer poſſeſs my field, when I am buried in it; I leave it to my ſon; if I have two, I divide it equally between them. I hear that among you Europeans, there are ſeveral nations where the law gives the whole to the eldeſt child, and nothing to the younger. It muſt have been ſordid intereſt that dictated ſuch unequal and ridiculous laws: I ſuppoſe either the elder children made it themſelves, or their

fathers, who were willing they ſhould have the pre-eminence.

BATCHELOR.

What body of laws appear to you the beſt?

SAVAGE.

Thoſe in which the intereſts of mankind, my fellow-creatures, have been moſt conſulted.

BATCHELOR.

And where are ſuch laws to be found?

SAVAGE.

In no place that I have ever heard of.

BATCHELOR.

You muſt tell me from whence the inhabitants of your country firſt came? who do you think firſt peopled America?

SAVAGE.

God——whom elſe ſhould we think?

BATCHELOR.

That is no anſwer. I aſk you from what country your people firſt came?

SAVAGE.

From the ſame country where our trees came. Really the Europeans appear to me a very pleaſant kind of people, to pretend that we can have nothing without them: we have juſt as much reaſon to ſuppoſe ourſelves your anceſtors, as you have to imagine yourſelves ours.

BATCHELOR.

You are an obſtinate little ſavage!

SAVAGE.

You a very babbling batchelor.

BATCHELOR.

But hearkye Mr. Savage, one word more with you, if you pleaſe. Do you think it right in Guiana to put thoſe to death who are not of the ſame opinion with themſelves?

SAVAGE.

Undoubtedly, provided you eat them afterwards.

BATCHELOR.

Now you are joking. What do you think of the conſtitution?

SAVAGE.

Your ſervant.

DIALOGUE V.

BETWEEN

ARISTUS and ACROTAL.

ACROTAL.

O Happy times, when the ſcholars of the univerſity, who had all beards on their chins, knocked on the head that vile mathematician Ramus, and dragged his body, naked and ſmeared with blood, to the doors of all the colleges, there to do penance.

ARISTUS.

This Ramus, I ſuppoſe, was an abominable wretch; ſurely he muſt have committed the moſt enormous crimes?

ACROTAL.

Nothing leſs. He wrote againſt Ariſtotle, and was ſuſpected of ſomething ſtill worſe. It is a thouſand pities they had not knocked out the brains of that fellow Charon, who took it into his head to write a treatiſe on wiſdom;

and Montagne too with his impudent reaſoning and pleaſantry. Oh! thoſe curſed reaſoners are the peſts of a ſtate.

ARISTUS.

Bad reaſoners indeed may be inſufferable; but I cannot ſee any occaſion to hang a poor man for a few falſe ſyllogiſms: beſides, in my opinion, the men you are exclaiming againſt, reaſon tolerably well.

ACROTAL.

So much the worſe; that makes them the more dangerous.

ARISTUS.

In what reſpect pray? did you ever know philoſophers bring famine, war, or peſtilence, into a country? Did Bayle, for example, againſt whom you ſo bitterly inveigh; did he ever attempt to break down the dykes in Holland, to drown the inhabitants, as a certain great ſtateſman, who was no philoſopher, is ſaid to have propoſed?

ACROTAL,

Would to God that Bayle had been drowned and all the reſt of the Dutch heretics! Why, was there ever ſuch an abominable fellow in the world? He ſets things forth with ſuch an odious fidelity, and places the argument on both ſides before our eyes with ſo mean an

impartiality, and is ſo inſupportably intelligible, that he puts even thoſe of the moſt common underſtanding in a condition to judge, and even to doubt, of what is told them. There is no bearing this; and for my part I confeſs, that whenever I hear the name of this man, and ſome others like him, mentioned, it throws me into a fit of holy rage.

ARISTUS.

I do not believe that either he or his followers ever intended to put you in a rage—but whither are you running in ſuch a hurry?

ACROTAL.

To pay my reſpects to Monſieur *Bardobardi*. I have waited theſe two days for an audience from him; but he has been always engaged either with his page or his miſtreſs, ſo that I have not been able to get at the ſpeech of him.

ARISTUS.

He is now at the opera. But pray what urgent buſineſs may you have with him?

ACROTAL.

Why I want to engage him to uſe his intereſt to have a little raſcally Abbe burnt, who has lately introduced among us the opinions of one Locke, an Engliſh philoſopher. Only think of that? what abominable impiety!

ARISTUS.

Well, but pray what are theſe very abominable opinions of this Engliſhman?

ACROTAL.

What do I know? Why, for example, he ſays, that we do not give ourſelves our ideas; that God is the maſter of all things, and can beſtow ſenſations and ideas on any being he ſhall be pleaſed to chuſe; that we are not acquainted either with the eſſence or elements of matter; that men do not always think; that a drunken man, when aſleep, has not his ideas ſo clear as when awake and ſober; with a thouſand other impertinences of equal weight.

ARISTUS.

Very well; and ſuppoſing this ſame raſcally abbe the pupil of Locke is wrong-headed, as not to believe that a drunken man in his ſleep meditates a great deal, muſt you for that reaſon perſecute him? What ill has he done? Has he conſpired againſt the ſtate? Has he mounted the pulpit to hold forth in the praiſe of theft, calumny, or murder? And pray tell me, between you and I, do you know one ſingle inſtance of a philoſopher's having cauſed the leaſt diſorder in ſociety?

ACROTAL.

Never, I muſt acknowlege.

ARISTUS.

Are they not, for the moſt part, perſons of retired lives? are they not generally poor, without protection or ſupport? and is it not partly on this very account that you proſecute them, as thinking them the more eaſy to be oppreſſed?

ACROTAL.

Formerly indeed thoſe of this ſect were perſons of very little credit or conſideration in the community, mere private citizens, ſuch as Socrates, Pomponatius, Eraſmus, a Bayle, or a Deſcartes; but now philoſophy has aſcended to the very ſeats of judicature, and even aſcended the throne; every one prides himſelf in making uſe of his reaſon, except in ſome countries indeed where we have taken care to put matters upon a different footing. Now this is of a moſt fatal tendency, and calls upon us to uſe our utmoſt endeavours to extirpate thoſe philoſophers at leaſt, who have neither fortunes, poſſeſſions, rank, nor power, in this world, as we cannot wreak our revenge upon thoſe that have.

ARISTUS.

Your revenge! and for what pray? Have theſe poor people ever diſputed with you your poſts, your privileges, or your wealth?

ACROTAL.

No, they hold us in contempt, if I muſt ſpeak the truth, and ſometimes make us the ſubjects of their raillery. Now that you know we never forgive.

ARISTUS.

If they make a jeſt of you they do wrong; we ſhould make a jeſt of no one: but tell me I beſeech you, how it comes about, that they have never made a jeſt of the laws or the magiſtrates of any country, and at the ſame time ridicule your body ſo unmercifully as you ſay they do.

ACROTAL.

Why that is the very thing that raiſes our choler, for we are far ſuperior to the law.

ARISTUS.

And this is preciſely the reaſon why ſo many worthy men have turned you into ridicule. You would have the laws, that are founded on univerſal reaſon, and by the Greeks called the daughters of heaven, give way to certain opinions, which are alike begotten and deſtroyed by caprice. Can you do otherwiſe than know, that what is juſt, clear and evident is eternally held in veneration by the world, while chimeras and idle dreams ſcarce challenge its attention?

ACROTAL.

Let us have done with the laws and the judges, and ſtick to the philoſophers: it cannot be denied, that they formerly ſaid and did as many ridiculous things as ourſelves; therefore we are bound to ſtand up againſt them, if it is only through jealouſy, like two of a trade.

ARISTUS.

Numbers of them have undoubtedly broached fooliſh opinions, becauſe they were men; but their fancies, however idle, never kindled civil war, whereas yours have been the cauſe of ſeveral.

ACROTAL.

And in this we are truly admirable. Can there be any thing more glorious, than to have put the whole world into commotion by a few arguments? Do we not in this reſemble thoſe magicians and enchanters of old, who could raiſe ſtorms and tempeſts by a few words? Were it not for theſe raſcally fellows with their underſtandings, we ſhould be lords of the univerſe.

ARISTUS.

Well then, tell them they have no underſtanding; prove to them that they reaſon badly: they have rallied you, why do you not

ridicule them in their turn? But, my dear Doctor, I must intercede with you for that poor disciple of Locke, that you are in such haste to have burnt. Consider those sort of proceedings are now quite out of fashon.

ACROTAL.

I believe you are in the right; we must fall upon some other method of silencing these insignificant philosophers.

ARISTUS.

Take my advice, be silent yourself. Do you and your fraternity ly under the rage of disputation? be compassionate and benevolent: seek not for evil where it is not, and it will cease to be where it is.

ESSAYS,

Literary and Philoſophical.

ESSAYS.

Of the JEWS.

YOU deſire me to give you a faithful picture of the ſpirit and hiſtory of the Jews: and, without entering into the ineffable ways of Providence, you want to diſcover, in the manners of that people, the true origin of thoſe events which Providence hath brought about.

Certain it is, of all the nations in the world, that of the Jews is the moſt remarkable. However contemptible they may be in the eyes of a politician, they are nevertheleſs well worthy of the ſerious attention of a philoſopher.

The Guebres, the Banians, and the Jews, are the only people that preſerve a being, notwithſtanding their diſperſion; and, without making an alliance with any other nation, perpetuate their race among ſtrangers, from whom they keep themſelves intirely diſtinct.

In former times the Guebres were infinitely more numerous than the Jews, as being the

remains of the ancient Perſians, who held the Jews in ſubjection: at preſent, however, they are only to be found in one corner of the Eaſt.

The Banians, ſprung from thoſe ancient people from whom Pythagoras derived his philoſophy, are only to be met with in Perſia and the Indies: but the Jews are ſcattered through the whole earth; and, were they now to be collected into one body, would compoſe a nation far more numerous than they were during the ſhort period that they were maſters of Paleſtine. Thoſe people who have committed to writing the hiſtory of their origin, have, almoſt all of them, endeavoured to heighten it with prodigies: with them, every thing is miraculous: their oracles foretel nothing but conqueſts; and ſuch of them as have really become conquerors, have made no difficulty to believe the truth of ancient oracles, ſo amply juſtified by the event. But what diſtinguiſhes the Jews from all other nations is, that their oracles alone are true: of this we are not permitted to entertain the leaſt doubt. Theſe oracles, which they underſtand in the literal ſenſe, have foretold, a hundred times, that they ſhould one day become maſters of the world; notwithſtanding which, they were ne-

ver in poſſeſſion of more than one paltry ſpot for a few years; nor have they, at preſent, a ſingle village they can call their own. They are therefore bound to believe, and in fact they do believe, that theſe predictions will be one day accompliſhed, and that they ſhall obtain the empire of the univerſe.

Among the Muſſulmans and Chriſtians they are conſidered as people of the meaneſt and moſt deſpicable character, and yet they believe themſelves to be of the greateſt importance. This pride, in the midſt of their abaſement, is juſtified by an unanſwerable argument; to wit, that they are really the fathers of both the Chriſtians, and the Muſſulmans. The Chriſtian and Mahometan religion acknowlege that of the Jews for their mother; whom, nevertheleſs, by a ſtrange kind of contradiction, they at once reſpect and abhor.

It is not our intention here to recount that long train of prodigies, which aſtoniſh the imagination, and exerciſe our faith. We only mean to examine thoſe events that are purely hiſtorical, ſtript of the divine agency, and of thoſe miracles which God condeſcended, for ſo long a time, to work in favour of this people.

At firſt we behold in Egypt a ſingle family

of ſeventy perſons. This, in the ſpace of two hundred and fifteen years, produced a nation capable of furniſhing ſix hundred thouſand fighting men, which, together with the old men, women, and children, may be ſuppoſed to amount to two millions of ſouls: a prodigious increaſe! to which the hiſtory of mankind cannot furniſh a parallel inſtance. This multitude having left Egypt, continued in the deſerts of Arabia Petraea for forty years, during which their numbers were conſiderably diminiſhed in that cold and barren country.

The remaining part of the nation advanced a little to the northward of theſe deſerts.

It appears, that their principles were the ſame with thoſe which were afterwards adopted by the natives of Arabia Petraea and Deſerta; for they put to death, in cold blood, the inhabitants of the ſmall towns which they took, and reſerved only the young women. The intereſt of population hath always been the chief aim of both the one and the other. We find that when the Arabs conquered Spain, they impoſed a tax of marriageable virgins upon all the provinces; and, even at this day, the Arabs of the Deſert never make a treaty

without ſtipulating for ſome preſents and young women.

The Jews arrived in a ſandy and mountainous country, in which there were ſome villages, inhabited by a ſmall nation called the Medianites*; from whom they took, in the courſe of one campaign, ſix hundred and ſeventy-five thouſand ſheep, ſeventy-two thouſand oxen, ſixty-one thouſand aſſes, and thirty-two thouſand maids. All the men, all the married women, and all the male children, were put to the ſword. The young women and the booty were divided among the people and the prieſts.

They afterwards made themſelves maſters of the town of Jericho†, in the ſame country; but having previouſly devoted the inhabitants

* They derived their name from Median, ſaid to be the ſon of Abraham and Ketura; and inhabited the country of Arabia Petraea. But that the whole nation was thus extirpated ſeems a little improbable, inaſmuch as we find the Iſraelites enſlaved by the Medianites in the ſequel; a ſtate of ſlavery from which they were delivered by Gideon.

† Joſephus tells us, that the plain of Jericho was planted with the tree which produces the real balm of Gilead, whence the city took the name of Jericho, which ſignifies ſweet odour. But none of thoſe trees are now to be ſeen on this ſpot.

to deſtruction, they put them all to the ſword, not even ſparing the young women; and granted life to none but to a harlot named Rahab, who had aſſiſted them in ſurpriſing the town.

It hath long been matter of diſpute among the learned, whether the Jews offered human ſacrifices to the Deity, like other nations; but this is merely a controverſy about words. Thoſe, it is true, whom they devoted to deſtruction, were not butchered upon the altar with all the parade of religious rites; but they were nevertheleſs ſacrificed, without its being lawful to ſpare ſo much as a ſingle perſon. In the twenty-ninth chapter of Leviticus, and twenty ſeventh verſe, the Moſaic law expreſly forbids them to ranſom thoſe whom they had devoted to deſtruction: the words are, "Let them die the death." It was in conſequence of this law that Jephtha vowed, and butchered his daughter; that Saul endeavoured to kill his ſon; and that Samuel the prophet hewed king Agag, Saul's priſoner, in pieces. Certain it is, God is the abſolute maſter of the lives of his creatures: it is our duty to believe theſe facts, and ſilently to reverence the deſigns of the Deity in permitting them.

It is likewiſe aſked, what right could ſtrang-

ers, ſuch as the Jews were, have to the land of Canaan? To which they anſwer, that they had that right which God gave them.

Hardly had they taken Jericho and Laiſh, when a civil law broke out between them, in which the tribe of Benjamin, men, women, and children, was almoſt intirely extirpated. Of the whole, there only remained ſix hundred males; and, in order to prevent the total ruin of one of their tribes, they thought proper to deſtroy a whole town of the tribe of Manaſſeh with fire and ſword, killing all the men, children, married women, and widows, and taking thence ſix hundred virgins, whom they gave to the ſix hundred ſurviving Benjaminites to repair their tribe, that ſo the number of their twelve tribes might be always complete.

Mean while the Phoenicians, a powerful people eſtabliſhed in their quarters from time immemorial, being alarmed at the depredations and cruelties of theſe new-comers, chaſtiſed them frequently; and the neighbouring princes uniting againſt them, they were reduced to a ſtate of ſervitude for upwards of two hundred years.

At laſt they made a king, and choſe him by lot. This king could not poſſibly be pow-

erful; for in the firſt battle which the Jews under his command fought with the Philiſtines, their maſters, they had neither ſword nor ſpear, nor a ſingle weapon of iron. But David, their ſecond king, makes war with more advantage and ſucceſs. He takes the town of Salem *, which was famous afterwards under the name of Jeruſalem; and then the Jews begin to make ſome figure in the confines of Syria.

From this time their religion and government aſſume a more auguſt form. Hitherto they had had no temples; a convenience poſſeſſed by all the nations around them. Solomon built a very ſuperb one, and reigned over this people for about forty years.

The reign of Solomon is not only the moſt flouriſhing period of the Jews, but all the kings of the earth together could not produce a treaſure nearly equal to that of Solomon's. His father David, who was not even poſſeſſed of iron, left Solomon twenty-five thouſand ſix

* It is ſuppoſed to have been founded by Melchiſedec; to have been taken by the Jebuſites, who poſſeſſed it till the time of Joſhua, who reduced the city, and cauſed their king Adonizedec, with four princes his allies, to be put to death. After the death of Joſhua, they recovered it, and built the citadel of Sion, of which they were diſpoſſeſſed by David.

hundred and forty-eight millions of French livres in ready money ‡, according to the preſent computation. His fleets, which traded to Ophir, brought him annually ſixty-eight millions in pure gold, not to mention ſilver and precious ſtones. He had four thouſand ſtables, as many coach houſes, twelve thouſand ſtables for his cavalry, ſeven hundred wives, and three hundred concubines. And yet he had neither wood nor workmen to build his palace and the temple: theſe he borrowed from Hiram king of Tyre, who likewiſe furniſhed him with gold, in return for which Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities. The commentators acknowlege that theſe facts are dubious, and ſuſpect that ſome error in the calculation muſt have eſcaped the tranſcribers; the only perſons, it ſeems, that could poſſibly be miſtaken.

The twelve tribes, of which the nation conſiſted, were ſeparated upon Solomon's death. The kingdom was torn in pieces, and divided into two petty provinces, the one called Judaea, and the other Iſrael; the latter contain-

‡ The ſum contributed by David and his princes towards the building of the temple, according to the value of the Moſaic talent, and the account given in the book of Chronicles, muſt have exceeded eight hundred millions ſterling.

ed nine tribes and a half, the former only two and a half. There reigned between theſe two nations a hatred, the more implacable as they were neighbours and relations, and profeſſed a different form of religion; for at Sichem and Samaria they worſhipped Baal, a word of Sidonian extraction; whereas at Jeruſalem, Adonai was the object of their worſhip. At Sichem two calves were conſecrated, and at Jeruſalem two cherubims; the latter of which were two winged animals, with two heads a-piece, and placed in the ſanctuary. Thus each party, having their own kings, their own Gods, their own worſhip, and their own prophets, were perpetually engaged in a cruel war with one another.

During the courſe of this war, the kings of Aſſyria, who conquered the greateſt part of Aſia, fell upon the Jews, with the rapidity of an eagle darting down upon two fighting lizards. The nine tribes and a half, ſettled at Samaria and Sichem, were carried off, and diſperſed beyond all poſſibility of return, and without its ever being diſtinctly known whither they were led into captivity.

As the diſtance from Samaria to Jeruſalem is but twenty leagues, and their territories lie contiguous, when one of theſe towns was

razed by the powerful conquerors, the other could not hold out long. Thus we find that Jeruſalem was often ſacked: it was tributary to the kings Hazael and Rezin; reduced to ſlavery by Teglatphalezer; thrice taken by Nebuchadnezzar, or Nebucchadonezer; and at laſt deſtroyed. Zedekiah, whom the conqueror had appointed king or governor, was carried captive, together with all his people, into Babylon; ſo that no Jews were left remaining in Paleſtine, except a few families of country ſlaves to ſow the land.

With regard to the little country of Samaria and Sichem, which was more fertile than that of Jeruſalem, it was repeopled by colonies of ſtrangers who were ſent thither by the kings of Aſſyria, and took the name of Samaritans.

The two tribes and a half, continuing in a ſtate of ſlavery for ſeventy years together in Babylon, and the neighbouring towns, had thereby an opportunity of learning the cuſtoms of their maſters, and of enriching their language by a proper mixture of the Chaldean tongue. From that time the Jews underſtood no other alphabet, or characters, than thoſe of the Chaldeans; and it is an indiſputable fact, that they even forgot the Hebrew dialect, ſubſtituting in its place from thenceforward

the Chaldean tongue. Joſephus, the hiſtorian, declares, that he wrote at firſt in the Chaldean tongue which was the language of his country. It appears, that the Jews imbibed a ſmall tincture of the ſciences of the magi. They ſoon became bankers, brokers, and chapmen; by which means they rendered themſelves neceſſary, as they ſtill are, and acquire immenſe fortunes.

Their great riches enabled them to procure from Cyrus a permiſſion to rebuild Jeruſalem; but when the time came, at which they were to have ſet out on their return home, thoſe who had grown rich at Babylon did not chuſe to quite ſuch a beautiful country for the mountains of Celoſyria, nor to abandon the fertile banks of the Tigris and Euphrates for the brook of Kidron. It was only the dregs and refuſe of the nation that returned with Zerobabel. The Jews of Babylon contributed only by their charitable collections towards the rebuilding of the city and temple; and even theſe collections were very inconſiderable. Eſdras ſays, that he could not make up in the whole above ſeventy thouſand crowns for rebuilding that temple, which was to be the temple of the univerſe.

The Jews were ſtill ſubject to the Perſians,

as they were likewiſe ſoon after to Alexander; and when that great man, the moſt excuſeable of all conquerors, began, in the firſt years of his victorious reign, to build Alexandria, and to make it the centre of commerce to the whole world, the Jews flocked thither to follow their trade of brokerage, and then it was that their rabbies acquired ſome knowlege of the learning of the Greeks, the language of which people was now become abſolutely neceſſary to all the trading Jews.

After the death of Alexander, they continued in ſubjection to the kings of Syria in Jeruſalem, and to the kings of Egypt in Alexandria; and when a war broke out between theſe monarchs, the Jews always underwent the common fate of ſubjects, and fell to the conqueror's ſhare.

From the time of their Babyloniſh captivity, the governors of Jeruſalem never aſſumed the name of king. The adminiſtration of civil affairs was intruſted to the high prieſts, who were nominated by their maſters. This dignity they ſometimes purchaſed at a very high price, as is ſtill done by the Greek patriarch of Conſtantinople.

Under Antiochus Epiphanes they raiſed a

rebellion: the city was once more pillaged, and its walls laid level with the ground.

At length, after a train of the like diſaſters, they obtained from Antiochus Sidetes, for the firſt time, about one hundred and fifty years before the vulgar aera, the liberty of coining money. From this time their governors aſſumed the name of kings, and even wore a diadem. Antigonus was the firſt that was adorned with this enſign of royalty, which, after all, when ſtript of power, can confer but little honour.

The Romans now began to be formidable to the kings of Syria, who held the Jews in ſubjection; but theſe laſt gained the ſenate of Rome by their preſents and ſubmiſſive behaviour. The wars, which the Romans were waging in Aſia Minor, ſeemed to promiſe a long reſpite to this unhappy people; but hardly had Jeruſalem begun to enjoy the leaſt degree of liberty, when it was rent by civil wars, and rendered much more miſerable under its ſhadows of kings, than ever it had been in all the various kinds of ſlavery in which it had been involved.

The better to compoſe their inteſtine commotions, they choſe the Romans for their umpires. Moſt of the kingdoms of Aſia Mi-

nor, of the ſouthern part of Africa, and of three fourths of Europe, already acknowleged the Romans for their lords and ſovereigns.

Pompey came into Syria to adminiſter juſtice to the different nations, and to depoſe ſome petty tyrants. Being impoſed upon by Ariſtobulus, who contended for the ſovereignty of Jeruſalem, he avenged himſelf both on him and his party. He took the city, hanged ſome of the moſt ſeditious, whether prieſts or phariſees, and, long after that, condemned Ariſtobulus the king of the Jews, to undergo a capital puniſhment.

The Jews, always wretched, always ſlaves, and always rebellious, drew upon them once more the Roman arms. Craſſus and Caſſius were ſent to chaſtiſe them; and Metellus Scipio cauſed one Alexander, a ſon of king Ariſtobulus, and the author of all theſe diſturbances, to be crucified.

Under Julius Caeſar they were perfectly quiet and peaceable. Herod, who hath ſince become famous among us, as well as among them, and was for a long time a ſimple tetrarch, purchaſed the crown of Judaea from Antony at a very high price. But Jeruſalem refuſed to acknowlege this new king, becauſe he was deſcended from Eſau, and not from

Jacob, and was beſides an Idumaean; and yet this circumſtance of his being a ſtranger was the very thing that induced the Romans to chuſe him, the better to curb this ſeditious people.

The Romans ſupported the king of their own nomination with an army; and Jeruſalem was once more taken by aſſault, ſacked, and pillaged.

Herod, being afterwards ſupported by Auguſtus, became one of the moſt powerful princes among all the petty monarchs of Arabia. He repaired Jeruſalem, and rebuilt the fortreſs that ſurrounded the temple, for which the Jews had ſo great a veneration. He even began to build the temple anew; but could not bring the work to perfection, for want of money and workmen. Hence it appears, that, after all, Herod was far from being rich; and that the Jews, though fond of their temple, were ſtill fonder of their money.

The name of king was merely a favour granted by the Romans, and by no means a title of ſucceſſion: for, ſoon after Herod's death, Judaea was reduced into the form of a leſſer Roman province, and governed by the proconſul of Syria; though the title of king was ſold, from time to time, for a round ſum

of money, ſometimes to a Jew, and ſometimes to one of another country; as it was to Agrippa the Jew, under the emperor Claudius.

Berenice, ſo famous for having engaged the affections of one of the beſt Roman emperors, was a daughter of Agrippa. This was the lady who, on account of the bad treatment which ſhe ſuffered from her countrymen, drew upon Jeruſalem the vengeance of the Roman arms. She demanded juſtice; but the factions in the city prevented her from obtaining her requeſt. The ſeditious ſpirit of the people carried them into new exceſſes. Cruelty hath ever been their diſtinguiſhed characteriſtic, and ſevere and exemplary puniſhments their juſt lot.

This memorable ſiege, which ended in the deſtruction of the city, was conducted by Titus and Veſpaſian. It is alleged by Joſephus, whoſe accounts indeed are moſtly exaggerated, that in the courſe of this ſhort war, a million of Jews and upwards were put to ſword: no wonder that an author who aſſigns fifteen thouſand inhabitants to every little village, ſhould kill a million of men! what remained of the people, were expoſed in the public markets, and every Jew was ſold for much the ſame

price that is uſually paid for the unclean animal which they dare not eat.

In this laſt diſperſion, they ſtill hoped for a deliverer, and under the reign of Adrian, whom they curſed in their prayers, there aroſe one Barcoſhebas, who called himſelf a new Moſes, a Shilo, a Chriſt. A number of theſe unhappy wretches having crouded to his ſtandard, which they believed to be ſacred, were entirely deſtroyed, together with their leader; and this gave a finiſhing ſtroke to the fortunes of that nation, from which it was never afterwards able to recover. The only thing that hath preſerved them from utter deſtruction is their prevailing opinion, that barrenneſs is a diſgrace. There are two duties which the Jews conſider as the moſt indiſpenſible of all others, namely, the getting of money and children.

From this ſhort ſketch, it appears that the Jews have always been either fugitives, or free-booters, or ſlaves, or rebels. At this very day they are vagabonds in the earth, and deteſted by the reſt of mankind; confident as they are, that the heaven, and the earth and all its inhabitants, were created for them alone.

It is evident, as well from the ſituation of Judaea, as from the genius of the people, that

they muſt ever have been in a ſtate of ſubjection. Surrounded as they were, by ſtrong and warlike nations, which they abhorred, they could neither enter into an alliance with them, nor receive any protection from them. They could not poſſibly defend themſelves by a naval force, having ſoon loſt the harbour, which in Solomon's time they had in the Red Sea; and Solomon himſelf having always employed Tyrians to build and navigate his ſhips, as well as to raiſe the temple, and his own palace. Hence too it appears that the Hebrews were ſtrangers to induſtry, and could never compoſe a flouriſhing nation. They had no regular troops, as the Aſſyrians, the Medes, the Perſians, the Syrians, and the Romans had. Their artiſts and peaſants took to arms upon preſſing emergencies, and of conſequence could never form a body of brave and warlike troops. Their mountains, or to ſpeak more properly, their rocks, were neither ſufficiently high nor ſufficiently contiguous to defend the entry into their country. The greateſt part of the nation being tranſported to Babylon, to Perſia, or the Indies, or ſettled in Alexandria, were too cloſely engaged in trade and brokerage to think of war. The civil government, whether republican, pontifical, monarchical,

or reduced, as it often was, to a ſtate of anarchy, was as imperfect as their military diſcipline.

You aſk me what was the philoſophy of the Hebrews. My anſwer ſhall be very ſhort; they had no philoſophy at all. Their legiſlator does not ſo much as mention the immortality of the ſoul, not a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments. Joſephus and Philo Judaeus believe that ſouls are material. Their doctors admit of corporeal angels; and during their abode at Babylon, they gave theſe angels the ſame names which the Chaldeans gave them; ſuch as Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel. The word ſatan is of Babyloniſh extraction, and is much the ſame with the Aremanes of Zoroaſter. The name of Aſmodeus too is a Chaldean word; and Tobias, who lived at Nineveh, is the firſt that uſed it. It was not till a long time after this that the Phariſees broached the doctrine of the immortality of the ſoul. The Sadducees always denied the ſpirituality and immortality of the ſoul, as alſo the exiſtence of angels; and yet the Sadducees always communicated with the Phariſees: there were even ſome high prieſts of the former ſect. This difference of opinions in theſe two great bodies was not pro-

ductive of any disturbances. During the latter years of their abode at Jerusalem, the Jews were only attached to their ceremonial law. The man who should have tasted of pudding or rabbit, would have been stoned; but he that denied the immortality of the soul, might attain to the dignity of high priest.

It is commonly supposed, that the hatred which the Jews bore to all other nations, was owing to their detestation of idolatry; but it is more probable that it proceeded from the barbarous manner in which they extirpated some colonies of the Canaanites, and the indignation which the neighbouring nations must of course have conceived against them. As they did not know of any other nations but such as bordered on their own country, they imagined that in hating these they hated the whole earth, and thus accustomed themselves to become the general enemies of mankind.

To be convinced that the idolatry of the neighbouring nations was not the true cause of their hatred, we need only consult the history of the Jews, where we shall see that they themselves were frequently idolaters. Solomon sacrificed to strange gods; nor can we hardly find one king after him, that did not permit the worship of these gods, and of-

fer them incenſe. The province of Iſrael preſerved its two calves and ſacred groves, or adored other deities.

This idolatry, of which the Heathens are commonly accuſed, is a ſubject but little underſtood. Perhaps it would be no difficult matter to clear the theology of the ancients from this aſperſion. All civilized nations have ever had a knowlege of one ſupreme Being, the ſovereign Lord of gods and men. The Egyptians themſelves acknowleged a firſt principle, which they called Knef, and to which every thing beſides was ſubordinate. The ancient Perſians adored the good principle Oromaſdes, and were very far from ſacrificing to the bad principle Arimanes, whom they conſidered in much the ſame light as we do the devil. The ancient Brachmans acknowleged one ſupreme Being. The Chineſe never joined an inferior being with the Deity, nor had they any idol till the worſhip of Fohi, and the ſuperſtition of the bonzees corrupted the minds of the people. The Greeks and Romans, notwithſtanding the great number of their gods, acknowleged Jupiter as the abſolute ſovereign of heaven and earth: nor does Homer himſelf, even in his moſt abſurd poetical fictions, ſo much as once deviate from this

truth. He always repreſents Jupiter as the only omnipotent Being, who ſends good and evil upon the earth, and who by a ſingle motion of his eye-brows makes gods and men to tremble. It is true they raiſed altars and offered ſacrifices to other gods; but then they always conſidered them as of an inferior order, and dependent on the ſupreme Being. There is not a ſingle inſtance, in all the records of antiquity, where the name of the Sovereign of heaven and earth is given to an inferior deity, ſuch as to Mercury, Apollo, or Mars. The thunder hath ever been an attribute of the ſupreme Lord of all.

The notion of a ſupreme Being, and of his providence and eternal decrees, is to be found in the works of all the poets and philoſophers.

In a word, it would perhaps be as unreaſonable to ſuppoſe that the ancients equalled their heroes, their genii, and inferior deities to that Being whom they called the father and Sovereign of the gods, as it would be to imagine that we conſidered ſaints and angels as equal to the Deity.

You further aſk me whether the ancient philoſophers and legiſlators derived their knowlege from the Jews, or the Jews from them? For an anſwer to this queſtion we muſt con-

ſult Philo Judaeus, who owns that before the ſeptuagint tranſlation of the bible, the books of the Jewiſh nation were intirely unknown to foreigners. Beſides, it can hardly be ſuppoſed that great and mighty nations ſhould borrow their laws and knowlege from an handful of obſcure ſlaves. Add to this, that the Jews had no books in the time of Hoziah. Under his reign the only remaining copy of the law was found by accident. From the time of the Babyloniſh captivity, they underſtood no alphabet but that of the Chaldeans. They were not famous for any art or manufacture; and even in the time of Solomon they were obliged to hire foreign workmen at a high price. To ſuppoſe that the Egyptians, the Greeks, and Perſians, derived their knowlege from the Jews, is to ſuppoſe that the Romans learned their arts and ſciences from the Low Bretons. The Jews were utterly unacquainted with natural philoſophy, geometry, and aſtronomy. Far from having any public ſchools for the education of youth, they have not ſo much as a word to expreſs that inſtitution. The inhabitants of Mexico and Peru regulated their year with much greater exactneſs than the Jews. Their abode at Babylon and Alexandria, where ſome of them might

have been ſuppoſed to have acquired a little learning, contributed only to improve them in the practice of uſury. They never underſtood the art of coining money; even when they had obtained a permiſſion for that purpoſe from Antiochus Sidetes, it was four or five years before they could avail themſelves of it; and after all it is alleged that the money was coined at Samaria. Hence it is that Jewiſh medals are ſo rare, and that moſt of them are ſpurious. In a word, after the moſt exact ſcrutiny, you will find the Jews to be an ignorant and barbarous people, who have long joined the moſt ſordid avarice to moſt abominable ſuperſtition, and to an implacable hatred to all other nations, among which, however, they are allowed to reſide, and to acquire immenſe fortunes. "And yet we do not think they ſhould be committed to the flames."

OF THE

AGE

OF

CONSTANTINE and JULIAN.

OF all the ages that ſucceeded the reign of Auguſtus that of Conſtantine is the moſt remarkable. The mighty innovations which he introduced into the world, will render his name famous to the lateſt poſterity. He began, it is true, by reviving the ſpirit of barbarity. Not only were there no Ciceros, no Horaces, no Virgils to be found in his reign; there were not even any Lucans or Senecas; not one judicious or faithful hiſtorian; nothing was to be ſeen but ſuſpected ſatires, or more dangerous panegyrics.

The Chriſtians began about this time to write hiſtory; but took neither Livy nor Thucydides for their model. The profeſſors of the ancient religion of the empire wrote with as little elegance of ſtile, and as little re-

gard to truth. The two parties, inflamed with mutual rancour, loaded each other with the groſſeſt and moſt undiſtinguiſhing abuſe; and hence it is that we find the ſame man ſometimes exalted into a God, and ſometimes degraded into a devil.

The Romans began viſibly to decline in all the polite ſciences, and even in the loweſt mechanic arts, as well as in virtue and eloquence, after the reign of Marcus Aurelius. He was the laſt emperor of the Stoic ſect; a ſect that raiſes man above himſelf, by making him ſevere to his own failings, and compaſſionate towards the failings of others. After the death of this truly philoſophic emperor, all was tyranny and confuſion. The ſoldiers frequently diſpoſed of the imperial crown. The ſenate fell into ſuch contempt, that in the time of Galien a law was enacted expreſly prohibiting the ſenators from following a military life. We find at one and the ſame time no leſs than thirty leading men, each at the head of a party, aſſuming the title of emperor, in thirty different provinces. About the middle of the third century, the barbarians poured in from all quarters upon the empire, which was already torn in pieces by inteſtine broils, and which, nevertheleſs, maintained itſelf for

ſometime by the mere force of its military diſcipline.

During theſe commotions chriſtianity gained ground by degrees, eſpecially in Egypt and Syria, and on the borders of Aſia Minor. The Romans admitted of all kinds of religion, as well as of all ſorts of philoſophical ſects. They permitted the worſhip of Oſiris; and, notwithſtanding their frequent revolts, they even granted the Jews ſome very conſiderable privileges. But the people in the provinces roſe againſt the Chriſtians, who were likewiſe perſecuted by the magiſtrates; and even imperial edicts were frequently publiſhed againſt them. Nor ought we to wonder that chriſtianity was held in ſuch general deteſtation, whilſt ſo many other kinds of religion were tolerated. The Egyptians, the Jews, and the votaries of the Syrian goddeſs, and of ſuch a multiplicity of other ſtrange gods, never declared open war againſt the gods of the empire, nor ever exclaimed againſt the prevailing religion; but one of the firſt duties of a chriſtian was to extirpate the eſtabliſhed religion of the empire. The heathen prieſts complained loudly of the great diminution of ſacrifices and offerings; and the people, always headſtrong and fanatical, roſe againſt the Chriſtians, who

were nevertheleſs protected by ſeveral emperors Adrian forbad the Romans to moleſt them on any account. Marcus Aurelius gave ſtrict orders that they ſhould not be perſecuted on the ſcore of religion. Caracalla, Heliogabalus, Alexander, Philip, and Galien, allowed them an entire liberty of conſcience. In the third century they had public churches, which were very magnificent, and crouded with hearers; and ſo great was the liberty they enjoyed, that they held no leſs than ſixteen councils in the courſe of this century. The road to poſts of honour being ſhut againſt the firſt chriſtians, who were moſtly of an obſcure extraction, they applied themſelves to commerce, and by that means acquired immenſe fortunes. This hath ever been the reſource of all theſe ſectaries who are diſqualified from enjoying any poſt in the ſtate; ſuch as the Calviniſts in France, the Non-conformiſts in England, the Catholicks in Holland, the Armenians in Perſia, the Banians in India, and the Jews in every part of the globe. At laſt the toleration became unlimited, and the ſpirit of the government grew ſo gentle, that the Chriſtians were admitted to all kinds of honours and dignities. They did not ſacrifice to the gods of the empire: the Romans never concerned themſelves

whether they went to the temples or not; they allowed every one a full liberty of conſcience with regard to religious duties, and no body was obliged to perform them. The Chriſtians enjoyed the ſame liberty with others; and ſo true is it that they obtained to poſts of honour, that in 303, we find Diocleſian and Galerius depriving them of this advantage in that perſecution, which we ſhall have occaſion to mention in the ſequel.

We ought to adore the divine providence in all its ways; but according to your orders, I confine myſelf to political hiſtory.

One Manes*, in the reign of Probus, and about the year 278, broached a new religion in Alexandria. This ſect was compoſed of the ancient principles of the Perſians, and of ſome doctrines of Chriſtianity. Probus and his ſucceſſor Carus, let Manes and the Chriſti-

* His firſt name was Curbicus, and his rank in life that of a ſlave to a widow, by whom he was adopted. At her death he aſſumed the name of Manes, pretended to be an Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, and even the Holy Ghoſt. He taught the good and evil principles of the magi, and the tranſmigration of ſouls: he denied the reſurrection, and forbad marriage. In a word, his doctrines are compoſed of a great nunber of abſurdities, borrowed from the religion of the Jews, Perſians, and other pagans.

ans live in peace. Numerian gave them a full liberty of conſcience. Diocleſian protected the Chriſtians, and tolerated the Manichaeans for twelve years; but in 296 he iſſued out an edict againſt the Manichaeans, and baniſhed them as enemies to the empire, and friends to the Perſians. The Chriſtians were not comprehended in this edict, but continued to live in peace under Diocleſian, and to make open profeſſion of their religion in every part of the empire, till the two laſt years of that prince's reign.

In order to finiſh the picture which you deſire me to draw, I muſt here beg leave to give you a ſhort account of the ſtate of the Roman empire at this period. Notwithſtanding the violent ſhocks which it had lately ſuſtained, as well from internal commotions, as from the incurſions of the barbarians, it ſtill comprehended all that is now poſſeſſed by the grand ſignor, except Arabia, all the German dominions of the houſe of Auſtria; and indeed all the provinces of Germany as far as the Elbe. It likewiſe contained Italy, France, Spain, England, half of Scotland, all Africa to the deſert of Dara, and even the Canary iſles. And yet theſe extenſive and widely diſtant countries were all held in ſubjection by

an army not near ſo conſiderable as what France or Germany, when engaged in war, uſually ſend into the field.

This mighty empire continued to gather ſtrength; and even an increaſe of territory from the time of Caeſar, to that of Theodoſius, as well by its laws, its policy, and acts of generoſity, as by the force of its arms and the terror of its name. It is ſtill matter of great ſurprize, that not one of the many nations that were conquered by the Romans, hath ever been able, ſince the recovery of their liberty, to make ſuch large and ſpacious roads, or to build ſuch magnificent amphitheatres and public baths as were left them by their conquerors. Countries now almoſt reduced to deſerts, and over-run with barbarity, were then populous, and bleſſed with a regular government; ſuch as Epirus, Macedonia, Theſſalia, Illyria, Pannonia, and eſpecially Aſia Minor, and the borders of Africa. It muſt be owned indeed that Germany, France, and England, were far from being then what they are at preſent. Theſe three countries ſeemed to have gained moſt by the recovery of their liberty; and yet it has required near twelve centuries to put them into the flouriſhing condition in which they now are. But with regard to all

the reſt it muſt be acknowleged that they have loſt greatly by changing their laws and maſters. The ruins of Aſia Minor and of Greece, the ſcanty number of inhabitants that is now to be found in Egypt, and the barbarity that overſpreads Africa, are ſtanding monuments of the Roman grandeur. The many flouriſhing towns with which theſe countries were once covered, are now changed into wretched villages; and even the very ſoil has grown barren under the hands of its ſtupid brutiſh inhabitants.

But I muſt now endeavour to give you a few remarks on the reign of Diocleſian, who was one of the moſt powerful emperors that ever ſwayed the Roman ſceptre, and has been the ſubject of much panegyric, and of much ſatire.

OF

DIOCLESIAN.

AFTER ſeveral weak or tyrannical reigns, Rome at laſt found a good emperor in Probus, who was nevertheleſs murdered by the legions. They choſe in his place one Carus, who was killed by a thunderbolt not far from the Tigris, as he was making war upon the Perſians. His ſon Numerian was immediately proclaimed by the ſoldiers. Hiſtorians tell us, and with an air of great gravity too, that this youth deplored the death of his father with ſuch floods of tears as almoſt deprived him of his ſight; and that in making a compaign he was ever after obliged to be ſurrounded with four curtains. He was killed in his bed by his father-in-law Aper, who aſcended the throne in his place. But a Gauliſh druid having foretold that Diocleſian, one of the generals of the army, ſhould become emperor immediately after having killed a wild boar, which in Latin is called Aper, that general aſſembled the army,

killed Aper with his own hand, in preſence of the ſoldiers, and thus accompliſhed the druid's prediction. The hiſtorians who relate this oracle as an undoubted fact, deſerve to be fed with the fruit of the tree which the druids ſo greatly revere*. Certain it is, Diocleſian killed the emperor's father-in-law; and this it ſeems was his firſt title to the throne. The ſecond was, that Numerian had a brother called Carinus, who was likewiſe emperor, and who having oppoſed the elevation of Diocleſian, was killed by one of his own military tribunes. Such were the claims which Diocleſian had to the crown; and for a long time indeed no other were regarded.

He was a native of Dalmatia, and born in the little town of Dioclaea, from which he took his name. If what is alleged be true, that his father was a common labourer, and that he himſelf in his youth was a ſlave of a certain ſenator, called Anulinus, it is the higheſt compliment that can be paid to his memory, inaſmuch as he muſt have owed his elevation entirely to his own merit; for it is evident that he gained the eſteem, and conciliated the affections of the ſoldiers to ſuch a degree, as

* That is, acorns.

to make them forget his birth, and raiſe him to the throne. Lactantius, a chriſtian author, but a little too partial, pretends to affirm that Diocleſian was the greateſt coward in the empire. But it is extremely improbable, that the Roman ſoldiers ſhould chuſe a coward for their emperor, and that this coward ſhould have paſſed through all the different ranks of the army. Lactantius, no doubt, is much to be commended for his pious zeal againſt a heathen emperor, though it were to be wiſhed that he had been a little more prudent in his manner of expreſſing it.

He kept theſe fierce ſoldiers, who made and unmade their emperors with equal eaſe, in a ſtate of order and ſubjection for twenty years; which is another proof, notwithſtanding all that Lactantius hath ſaid to the contrary, that he was as great a prince as he was a brave ſoldier. Under his government the empire ſoon recovered its former ſplendour. The Gauls, the Africans, the Egyptians, and the Engliſh, who ſeverally revolted, were all reduced to their former allegiance to the Roman empire; and the Perſians were entirely ſubdued. Such a conſtant courſe of ſucceſs abroad, and a more happy adminiſtration at home; laws equally humane and wiſe, as may ſtill be ſeen

in the Juſtinian code; Rome, Milan, Autun, Nicomedia, and Carthage, embelliſhed by his munificence, all conſpired to procure him the love and eſteem of both the eaſtern and weſtern parts of the empire; ſo that two hundred and forty years after his death, the firſt year of his reign was conſidered as the common aera, in the ſame manner as the foundation of Rome had formerly been. This is what is uſually called the aera of Diocleſian. Some affect to call it the aera of the Martyrs: but that is an error of at leaſt eighteen years; for it is indiſputably certain that Diocleſian did not perſecute a ſingle Chriſtian for the firſt eighteen years of his reign. On the contrary, one of the firſt things he did, after aſcending the throne, was to grant a company of the pretorian guards to a chriſtian, called Sabaſtian, who is likewiſe to be found in the catalogue of ſaints.

He was not afraid to admit a colleague on the throne, in the perſon of a ſoldier of fortune like himſelf. This was a friend of his own, one Maximilianus Hercules. The ſimilarity of their fortunes was the foundation of their friendſhip. Maximilianus Hercules was born of mean and poor parents, and like Diocleſian, had raiſed himſelf by his courage. Some peo-

ple have found fault with Maximilianus for aſſuming the ſurname of Hercules, and with Diocleſian for taking that of Jovius*: not remembering that we every day ſee clergymen of the name of Hercules, and citizens who are called Caeſar or Auguſtus.

Diocleſian created two Caeſars more. The firſt was another Maximilianus, ſurnamed Galerius, who had originally been a ſhepherd. One would think that Diocleſian, the moſt haughty and ſupercilious man in the world, and the firſt that introduced the cuſtom of kiſſing the emperor's feet, took a pride in filling the throne of the Caeſars with men of the meaneſt extraction. A ſlave and two peaſants were now at the head of the empire, which, notwithſtanding, was never in a more flouriſhing condition.

The ſecond Caeſar he created was a perſon of illuſtrious birth, being by his mother the grand-nephew of the emperor Claudius II. his name Conſtantius Chlorus. By theſe four princes was the empire governed. This aſſociation might have produced four civil wars in the ſpace of one year; but Diocleſian knew

* Jovius was no more than a Latin tranſlation of his Greek name Diocles.

ſo well how to overawe his colleagues that he always obliged them to pay him a proper reſpect, and to live in harmony among themſelves. Theſe princes, though dignified with the lofty title of Caeſars, were in reality no more than his prime miniſters. We even find him treating them with all the authority of an abſolute ſovereign; for when Caeſar Galerius, who had been beat by the Perſians, came to Meſopotamia to give him an account of his defeat, he left him to walk for a mile together by the ſide of his chariot, and did not receive him into favour, till he had repaired his fault, and retrieved his misfortune.

This Galerius had the good fortune to do in the ſucceeding year 297, in a very ſingle manner. He beat the king of Perſia in perſon. Theſe kings of Perſia had never ſince the battle of Arbella, been cured of the folly of bringing their wives, their daughters, and eunuchs to the field. Galerius took the king of Perſia's wife and family, as Alexander had done before, and treated them with the ſame reſpect. The peace was as glorious as the victory. The Perſians ceded five provinces to the Romans, extending from the ſandy deſerts of Palmyra to Armenia.

Dioclesian and Galerius went to Rome to

exhibit a new kind of triumph. This was the firſt time that ever the Romans had ſeen the wife and children of a Perſian monarch in chains. The empire enjoyed peace and plenty. Diocleſian viſited all the provinces, and went from Rome to Egypt, Syria, and Aſia Minor. His uſual reſidence was not at Rome, but at Nicomedia, near the Euxine ſea; whether it was that he had choſen this place the more narrowly to watch the motions of the Perſians and Barbarians, or from an attachment to a retreat which he himſelf had embelliſhed.

It was in the midſt of theſe ſucceſſes that Galerius began to perſecute the Chriſtians. Why had they been allowed to live in peace ſo long? and why were they now perſecuted? Euſebius ſays, that one Marcellus a centurion of Trajan's legion, which was then in Mauritania, happening to aſſiſt with his company at a feaſt that was given on account of the victory obtained by Galerius, threw down his military belt, his arms, and his bundle of vine-branches, which was the badge of his office, ſaying aloud that he was a Chriſtian, and that he would ſerve Pagans no longer. The deſerter was capitally puniſhed by a council of war; and this is the firſt avowed inſtance of that famous perſecution. Certain it is, there

were many Chriſtians in the Roman army; and the intereſt of the ſtate required that ſuch a public deſertion ſhould not paſs unpuniſhed. Marcellus's zeal, no doubt, was extremely pious; but unhappily it was far from being reaſonable. If in this feaſt, which was given in Mauritania, the gueſts eat any kinds of meat that had been offered to heathen gods, the law did not command Marcellus to partake with them; but neither ſurely did chriſtianity command him to give an example of ſedition; and there is no country in the world where ſuch an inexcuſable action ſhould not be ſeverely puniſhed.

Nevertheleſs, after this adventure of Marcellus, it does not appear that the Chriſtians underwent any freſh perſecution till the year 303. At Nicodemia they had a ſuperb cathedral, oppoſite the palace, and even higher than it. Hiſtorians do not inform us why Galerius demanded of Diocleſian the inſtant demolition of this church; but they tell us that Diocleſian was a long time in coming to a reſolution; and that it was almoſt a year before he would give his conſent. After this, is it not ſomewhat ſtrange that Diocleſian ſhould be called a perſecutor? At laſt in 303, the church was demoliſhed, and an edict publiſhed, depriving

the Chriſtians of all marks of honour, and of all places of truſt. From the very circumſtance of their being deprived of theſe, it is evident that they once poſſeſſed them. Some Chriſtian or other was ſo fooliſh as to pull down the imperial edict from the poſt to which it was affixed, and publicly tear it in pieces. This ſurely could not proceed from a principle of religion; but from a ſpirit of rebellion. Hence it is probable that an indiſcreet zeal, and which, in the language of ſcripture, was not according to knowlege, occaſioned this fatal perſecution. Some time after, the palace of Galerius was burnt. Galerius accuſed the Chriſtians for having ſet fire to it; and they, in their turn, accuſed him of having done it himſelf in order to find a pretext for blackening their character. The accuſation which Galerius brings againſt the Chriſtians ſeems to be unjuſt; that which they bring againſt him is no leſs ſo; for the edict being already publiſhed, what need had he of a new pretext? If, in fact, he wanted new arguments to engage Diocleſian in a perſecution, that would only be a freſh proof of Diocleſian's averſion to abandon the Chriſtians, whom he had always protected; as it would plainly

ſhew that new motives were neceſſary to puſh him on to violent meaſures.

It cannot be denied that there were many Chriſtians put to the torture in the empire; but we can hardly reconcile with the lenity of the Roman laws all thoſe exquiſite torments and mutilations, thoſe plucked out tongues, thoſe mangled and broiled limbs, and thoſe public inſults upon modeſty, inconſiſtent with common decency, which we every where read of. No Roman law ever enjoined ſuch puniſhments. The populace indeed, from their hatred to the Chriſtians, might poſſibly be carried to the commiſſion of ſome ſhocking cruelties; but we do not find that theſe cruelties had the ſanction either of the emperor or the ſenate.

The juſt grief of the Chriſtians probably vented itſelf in exaggerated complaints. The Acta Sincera inform us, that when the emperor was at Antioch, the pretor condemned to the flames a Chriſtian child called Romain; and that the Jews, who were preſent at the execution, wickedly fell a laughing, and ſaid, "We had once three children, Shadrech, Meſhech, and Abednego, who were not burnt though caſt into the fiery furnace; but theſe chriſtians burn faſt enough." But, to the utter

confuſion of the Jews, a heavy ſhower of rain fell at that very inſtant, and extinguiſhed the pile, and the boy came out of it, ſaying, " where then is the fire ?". The Acta Sincera add, that the emperor gave him his life ; but that the judge ordered his tongue to be cut out. But is it credible that a judge ſhould cut out the tongue of a boy to whom the emperor had granted a pardon ?

But what follows is ſtill more ſurprizing. It is pretended that an old chriſtian phyſician, called Ariſton, who happened to be preſent with his anatomical knife, cut out the boy's tongue, in order to make his court to the pretor. Little Romain was immediately ſent to priſon, and the jailor aſked him the news. The child gave him a long account of the manner in which the old phyſician had cut out his tongue. It muſt be obſerved, that, before the operation, the boy ſtammered greatly in his ſpeech ; but that he now ſpoke with ſurpriſing volubility. The jailor did not fail to acquaint the emperor with this miracle. The old phyſician was ſent for, and examined : he ſwore that he had performed the operation according to the rules of art, and ſhewed them the child's tongue, which he had kept in a box as a ſacred relick. " Give me the firſt man

that comes in, ſays he: I will cut out his tongue in your majeſty's preſence, and then you ſhall ſee whether or not he can ſpeak." The propoſal was accepted, and a poor man pitched upon for the purpoſe. The phyſician cut out as much of his tongue as he had done of the boy's, and the man expired in an inſtant.

I am willing to believe that the Acts which relate this fact, are as ſincere as their title imports; but ſurely they are more ſimple than ſincere: and it is ſtrange that Fleury, in his Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, ſhould relate ſuch a prodigious number of the like facts, which are more apt to occaſion ſcandal than to promote edification.

You muſt further obſerve, that in 303, when it is alleged that Diocleſian was preſent at this pretty adventure, he was actually at Rome, and ſpent the whole year in Italy. It is pretended that it was at Rome, and even in the emperor's preſence, that St. Geneſtus, the comedian, was converted on the ſtage, as he was playing a comedy againſt the Chriſtians. This comedy plainly ſhews, that the taſte of Plautus and Terence was then extinct. What is now called comedy, or Italian farce, ſeems to have taken its riſe in thoſe times. St. Geneſtus

acted a ſick perſon. The phyſician aſked him what was his diſeaſe. "I feel myſelf too heavy," ſays Geneſtus. "Would you chuſe to be pared a little," ſays the phyſician, "to make you more light?" "No," replies Geneſtus; "but I will die a Chriſtian, that ſo I may be raiſed with a handſome ſhape." Upon which the actors, dreſſed like prieſts and conjurer, came to baptize him. At that inſtant Geneſtus became a Chriſtian; and, inſtead of finiſhing his part, began to preach to the emperor and the people. This miracle is likwiſe contained in the Acta Sincera.

Certain it is, there were many real martyrs; but it is equally certain, that the provinces were not deluged with blood, as is commonly ſuppoſed. Mention is made of about two hundred martyrs that ſuffered in the whole extent of the Roman empire, during the laſt years of Diocleſian's reign; and it appears, even from the letters of Conſtantine himſelf, that Diocleſian had a leſs ſhare in this perſecution than Galerius *.

Diocleſian fell ſick in the courſe of this

* Nevertheleſs he is ſaid to have entered ſo eagerly into the ſpirit of this perſecution, that he cauſed trophies to be erected, with ſubſcriptions (ſome of them ſtill extant in Spain) importing, that he had extended

year, and, finding himſelf impaired, was the firſt that gave the world an example of abdicating an empire; though it is hard to ſay whether this abdication was voluntary or forced. What is certain is, that, having recovered his health, he lived nine years after, equally honoured and undiſturbed, in his country-houſe at Salona, the place of his birth. He was wont to ſay, that he had never begun to live till the day of his retirement; and, when preſſed to remount the throne, he declared, that it was not worth the tranquillity he now enjoyed; and that he took more pleaſure in cultivating his garden, than he had ever done in governing the world. What is the natural inference from all theſe facts? Is it not, that, notwithſtanding his many failings, he reigned like a great emperor, and died like a philoſopher?

the Roman empire both in the Eaſt and Weſt, extinguiſhed the name of the Chriſtians, who had imbroiled the republic, aboliſhed their ſuperſtition over all the earth, and augmented the worſhip of the gods.

OF

CONSTANTINE.

AT preſent I do not mean to ſpeak of that confuſion which overſpread the empire, after the abdication of Diocleſian. Upon his death, there were no leſs than ſix emperors at once. Conſtantine triumphed over them all; changed the religion of the empire; and was the author not only of that grand revolution, but likewiſe of all the other innovations that have ſince taken place in the Weſt. You want to know his real character. Aſk it of Julian, of Zozimus, of Sozomenus, and of Victor. They will tell you, that, at firſt, he was a great prince; afterwards a public robber; and, laſt of all, a voluptuary, a debauchee, and a prodigal. They will paint him as an ambitious, cruel, and blood-thirſty tyrant. But aſk it, on the other hand, of Euſebius, of Gregory of Nazianze, and of Lactantius, and they will tell you, that he was

a man poſſeſſed of every virtue. Between theſe two extremes how ſhall we diſcover the truth? By well-vouched facts, and by theſe alone. He had a father-in law; him he obliged to hang himſelf. He had a brother-in-law; him he ſtrangled. He had a nephew, of twelve or thirteen years of age; his throat he cut. He had a ſon and heir; his head he took off. He had a wife; and her he ſtifled in a bath. An old French author ſays, "that he loved to make a clean houſe."

If to theſe domeſtic crimes you add, that happening to be one day hunting a band of Franks that inhabited the banks of the Rhine, and having taken their kings, who were probably of the family of our Pharamond and Clodion the Hairy, he expoſed them to wild beaſts for his diverſion; you may then ſafely conclude, that he was not the moſt humane and polite man in the world.

Let us now take a curſory view of the principal events of his reign. His father, Conſtantius Chlorus, was in England, where he had borne the title of emperor for a few months. Conſtantine was at Nicomedia with the emperor Galerius, from whom he aſked leave to go and viſit his father, who was ſick. Gale-

rius granted his requeſt; and Conſtantine ſet out on the poſt-horſes of the empire, which were called Veredarii. It was no leſs dangerous, it ſeems, to be a poſt-horſe than to be a member of Conſtantine's family; for the moment he had finiſhed his journey, he cauſed all the horſes to be hamſtrung, for fear that Galerius ſhould revoke his permiſſion, and order him to return to Nicodemia. Finding his father on his death-bed, he procured himſelf to be declared emperor by the few Roman troops that were then in England.

A Roman emperor choſen at York, by five or ſix thouſand men, could not poſſibly be recognized at Rome as lawfully elected: he wanted, at leaſt, the formula of *Senatus populuſque Romanus*. The ſenate, the people, and the pretorian guards, unanimouſly fixed their choice upon Maxentius, ſon to Caeſar Maximilianus Hercules, himſelf already a Caeſar, and brother of that Fauſta whom Conſtantine had married, and afterwards put to death.

This Maxentius is called a tyrant and uſurper by our hiſtorians, who are always ſure to ſide with the ſtrongeſt party. He protected the heathen religion, in oppoſition to Conſtantine, who already began to declare for the

Chriſtians. A heathen, and vanquiſhed! how could he fail to be reckoned an abominable wretch?

Euſebius tells us, that when Conſtantine was going to Rome to attack Maxentius, both he and the whole army ſaw in the clouds the large ſtandard of the emperors, called Labarum, mounted with a large Greek R, with a St. Andrew's Croſs, and two Greek words, the meaning of which was, "By this you ſhould conquer." Some authors allege, that this ſign appeared at Beſancon; others ſay that it was at Cologn; ſome at Treves, and others at Troye. Strange! that heaven ſhould explain itſelf in Greek in all theſe different countries. It would have been more natural, at leaſt in the judgment of ſhort-ſighted mortals, for this ſign to have made its appearance in Italy on the day of battle; but then the inſcription muſt have been in Latin. A learned antiquary, of the name of Laiſel, hath refuted the authenticity of this phaenomenon; in conſequence of which he hath been branded with the appellation of an infidel.

After the victory which Conſtantine obtained, the ſenate were not backward in adoring the conqueror, and execrating the memory of the conquered. They immediately ſtripped

the triumphal arch of Marcus Aurelius to adorn that of Conſtantine, to whom they likewiſe erected a golden ſtatue; an honour which, before that time, had never been paid to any but the gods. This he received, notwithſtanding the Labarum; as alſo the title of high prieſt, which he retained all his life. His firſt care, according to Nazarius and Zozimus, was to extirpate the whole race of the tyrant, together with his principle friends; after which he aſſiſted, with great humanity, at the ſpectacles and public games.

Old Diocleſian was then dying in his retreat at Salona. Conſtantine needed not have been in ſuch a hurry to demoliſh his ſtatue at Rome. He might have remembered, if he pleaſed, that this emperor had been his father's benefactor, and had even been the means of raiſing him to the throne. Having thus vanquiſhed Maxentius, his next buſineſs was to get rid of Licinius, his brother-in-law, who was dignified with the title of Auguſtus as well as himſelf; and Licinius, on his part, reſolved to make away with Conſtantine, if he poſſibly could. But, as their quarrels were not yet come to an open rupture, they granted, conjointly, at Milan, in 313, the famous edict of liberty of conſcience. "We give

every man," ſay they, "a liberty of following whatever religion he pleaſes, that ſo we may draw down the bleſſing of God upon us and our ſubjects: and we declare, that we have granted the Chriſtians a free and full permiſſion of profeſſing their religion, provided that every other perſon ſhould enjoy the ſame privileges, that ſo the peace of our reign may not be diſturbed."

Conſtantine was not as yet a Chriſtian, any more than his colleague Licinius. He had ſtill another emperor or tyrant to deſtroy, one Maximinus, a determined pagan. Licinius fought Maximinus before he attacked Conſtantine. Heaven was ſtill more propitious to him, than it had ever been to Conſtantine himſelf. The latter had only the appearance of a ſtandard, the former had that of an angel. This angel taught him a prayer, by virtue of which he muſt undoubtedly conquer the barbarian Maximinus. Licinius put the prayer in writing, recited it three times to his army, and obtained a complete victory. Had this Licinius, brother-in-law to Conſtantine, enjoyed a happy reign, we ſhould have heard of nothing but his angel; but Conſtantine having cauſed him to be hanged, cut the throat of his young ſon, and rendered himſelf an ab-

ſolute ſovereign, we now hear of nothing but of Conſtantine's Labarum.

It is commonly believed that he put his eldeſt ſon Criſpus, and his wife Fauſta, to death, the ſame year that he aſſembled the council of Nice. Zozimus and Sozomenus pretend, that when the heathen prieſts told him that his crimes were inexpiable, he immediately made open profeſſion of Chriſtanity, and demoliſhed ſeveral temples in the Eaſt. It is not likely that the heathen prieſts would neglect ſuch a favourable opportunity of bringing back to their party the high prieſt, by whom they had been abandoned: and yet there might poſſibly be amongſt them ſome rigid fanatics; for ſuch are every where to be found. But, what is ſtill more ſurpriſing, Conſtantine the Chriſtian underwent no penance for his parricides. It was at Rome that he committed theſe barbarous crimes, and from that time he could never endure to reſide in it: he therefore left it entirely, and went to build the city of Conſtantinople. How can he preſume to ſay, as he does in one of his reſcripts, that he transferred the ſeat of the empire to Conſtantinople by the expreſs orders of God? Is not this at once to mock the Deity, and to inſult the common ſenſe of mankind? Had God given

him any orders, would it not have been not to aſſaſſinate his wife and ſon?

Diocleſian had ſet the example of tranſferring the ſeat of the empire towards the borders of Aſia. The Romans, enſlaved and degenerated as they already were, could not endure the pride, the deſpotiſm, and the effeminacy of the Aſiatics. The emperors would never have dared to introduce the cuſtom of making their ſubjects kiſs their feet at Rome, nor to fill their palaces with crowds of eunuchs. Diocleſian began at Nicomedia to put the Roman court upon the ſame footing with that of the Perſian monarchs: and Conſtantine accompliſhed the pernicious ſcheme at Conſtantinople. From that time Rome loſt her ancient ſpirit, and gradually fell into decay; and thus Conſtantine gave the moſt fatal blow that ever was given to the Roman empire.

Of all the emperors, he was certainly the moſt deſpotic. Auguſtus had left the Romans, at leaſt, the ſhadow of liberty. Tiberius, and even Nero himſelf, had cajoled the ſenate and the people. But Conſtantine was above condeſcending to theſe political arts. By diſbanding, immediately upon his elevation to the throne, the brave pretorian ſoldiers, who conſidered themſelves as maſters of the Roman em-

perors, he eſtabliſhed his authority upon a ſolid foundation. He made an intire ſeparation between the ſword and the gown. The depoſitaries of the laws, now cruſhed by the military power, were, at beſt, but enſlaved lawyers. The Roman provinces were governed on a new plan *. The great aim of Conſtantine was to be abſolute in every thing; and, in fact, he was ſo both in church and ſtate. We ſee him convoking and opening the council of Nice; entering amidſt the fathers, covered with jewels and adorned with a diadem; taking the firſt place, and baniſhing indiſcriminately one while Arius, and at another St. Athanaſius. He put himſelf at the head of Chriſtianity, without being a Chriſtian; for, in thoſe times, none but ſuch as were baptized were diſtinguiſhed by that appellation; ſo that, in effect, Conſtantine was only a catechumen.

* The empire was divided into four different governments, each under the authority of a prefectus praetorii; though he had no power over the troops, the command of which was given to provincial generals, who had under them counts and dukes. Each general government was ſubdivided into dioceſes, the governors of which were ſtiled vicars to the prefecti praetorii; and every dioceſe was compoſed of ſeveral petty provinces, ruled by conſulars, preſidents or correctors. This ſubdiviſion had been firſt made by Diocleſian.

Even the cuſtom of waiting the approach of death, in order to be dipt in the water of regeneration, began to be diſcontinued by ſome individuals. If Conſtantine imagined, that, by deferring his baptiſm, he might commit all manner of crimes with impunity, in hopes of obtaining a full pardon at laſt, it was very unlucky for the reſt of the world, that ſuch an opinion ſhould have been put into the head of a man ſo powerful and deſpotic.

OF JULIAN.

LET us ſuppoſe, for a moment, that Julian abandoned the heathen for the chriſtian religion. Let us next conſider him as a man, a philoſopher, and an emperor; and then let us try if we can find a prince of a more excellent character. Within theſe few years his name was never mentioned without the epithet of Apoſtate; and it is, perhaps, one of the greateſt efforts of reaſon, that we have at length ceaſed to diſtinguiſh him by that opprobrious appellation. The ſtudy of the liberal arts has inſpired the learned with the ſpirit of toleration. Who would believe, that, in one of the numbers of the Paris Mercury in 1741, the author ſhould ſeverely cenſure a public writer, for being ſo much wanting to common decency as to call this emperor "Julian the Apoſtate?" Had any one, an hundred years ago, refuſed to call him an Apoſ-

tate, he himſelf would have been ſure to incur the imputation of atheiſm.

What is equally certain and ſurpriſing is, that if you lay aſide the conſideration of his unhappy change, and neither follow him to the chriſtian churches, nor the pagan temples; but obſerve him narrowly in his houſe, in the camp, in battle, in his manners, his conduct, and writings; you will find him equal, in every reſpect, to Marcus Aurelius. And hence, perhaps, you may be convinced that this man, who is commonly repreſented as an abominable wretch, is nevertheleſs the firſt, or, at leaſt, the ſecond of mankind. Always ſober, and always temperate; keeping no miſtreſſes; lying upon a bear's ſkin, and in that ſimple couch giving but a few hours to ſleep; dividing his time between ſtudy and buſineſs; generous, friendly, and modeſt: had he been a private man, he would have been the object of univerſal admiration.

If we conſider him as a hero, we ſhall find him always at the head of his troops, re-eſtabliſhing military diſcipline without ſeverity, and equally beloved and reſpected by his ſoldiers; leading his armies almoſt always on foot, and ſharing with them in all their dangers; ſucceſsful in all his expeditions; and at laſt

ending his days in gaining a complete victory over the Perſians. His death was that of a hero, and his laſt words were thoſe of a philoſopher: "I chearfully ſubmit, ſaid he, to the eternal decrees of heaven; convinced that he who would wiſh to live when he muſt die, is more cowardly than he who would wiſh to die when he ought to live." He continued, to his laſt hour, to diſcourſe on the immortality of the ſoul. No fruitleſs complaints, no unmanly fears; he talked of nothing but ſubmiſſion to the Divine Providence. Conſider now, that the perſon who died thus had been an emperor for thirty-two years, and then ſay, if you ought to inſult his memory.

If we view him as an emperor, we find him refuſing the title of *dominus*, to which Conſtantine aſpired; relieving his ſubjects, diminiſhing the taxes, encouraging the arts, reducing from ſeventy ounces to three or four hundred marks thoſe crowns of gold which his predeceſſors exacted from all the towns, enforcing the execution of the laws, keeping his officers and miniſters to their duty, and preventing all kind of bribery and corruption.

Ten chriſtian ſoldiers conſpire his death: they are diſcovered, and Julian forgives them.

The people of Antioch, equally inſolent and effeminate, inſult him: he puniſhes them, with his uſual greatneſs of ſoul; and, capable as he was of making them feel the whole weight of imperial power, he only makes them ſenſible of the ſuperiority of his genius. Compare with this the puniſhments which Theodoſius (now almoſt ſainted) inflicts at Antioch; all the citizens of Theſſalonica butchered, on an occaſion of much the ſame nature; and then ſay, which of the two men you think the moſt virtuous.

Gregory of Nazianzen, and Theodoret, ſeem to conſider it as their duty to blacken the character of this prince, becauſe he abandoned the chriſtian religion; never remembering that one of the moſt glorious triumphs of this religion was to withſtand the efforts of a great and wiſe man, after having reſiſted ſo many tyrants. One of theſe authors ſays, that he filled Antioch with blood, from a ſpirit of cruel revenge. How could a fact ſo notorious eſcape the obſervations of all other hiſtorians? On the contrary, it is well known that he ſhed no blood at Antioch, but the blood of victims. The other has the impudence to affirm, that when he was juſt expiring, he threw his blood againſt heaven, and

exclaimed, "Thou has conquered, O Galilean!" How, in the name of wonder, could ſuch a ridiculous ſtory ever gain credit? Or is ſuch an action, and ſuch words, conſiſtent with the reſt of his character?

But perhaps it may be aſked, by men of more ſenſe than theſe defamers of Julian, how it was poſſible for a ſtateſman, a genius, and a true philoſopher, as Julian confeſſedly was, to abandon Chriſtianity, in which he had been edueated, in favour of the heathen religion, to the abſurd and ridiculous nature of which he could not be a ſtranger? If Julian, ſay they, liſtened too much to his reaſon in examining the myſteries of Chriſtianity, he ought, one would think, to have liſtened ſtill more to that reaſon in examining the fables of the heathens.

Perhaps, by tracing him through the courſe of his life, and obſerving his character with greater attention, we ſhall be able to diſcover the true cauſe of that ſtrong averſion he had to Chriſtianity. Conſtantine, his grand-uncle, the firſt emperor that embraced the new religion, had imbrued his hands in the blood of his wife, his ſon, his brother-in-law, his nephew, and his father-in-law. Conſtantine's three ſons began their bloody reign by butcher-

ing their uncle and their couſins. From that time nothing was to be ſeen but murders and civil wars. Julian's father, and eldeſt brother, all his relations, and even himſelf, though a child, were condemned to death by his uncle Conſtantius. Happily he eſcaped the general maſſacre. His firſt years were paſt in exile; and at laſt he owed the preſervation of his life, his fortune, and the title of Caeſar, to the good offices of the empreſs Euſebia, wife to his uncle Conſtantius, who, after having had the cruelty to baniſh him in his infancy, had now the imprudence to make him a Caeſar, and afterwards the ſtill greater imprudence to provoke him by perſecution.

He was an eye-witneſs of the intolerable inſolence with which a biſhop behaved to Euſebia, his benefactreſs. This was one Leontius biſhop of Tripoli. He ſent the empreſs word, "that he would not pay her a viſit, unleſs ſhe would promiſe to receive him in a manner ſuitable to his epiſcopal character; to wit, that ſhe ſhould meet him at the door, incline her body, in order to receive his benediction, and not preſume to ſit down till he ſhould give her leave." The heathen prieſts behaved to the empreſſes in a very different manner. This pride, ſo oppoſite to the true ſpirit of

Chriſtianity, could not fail to make a deep impreſſion on the mind of a young man, already in love with philoſophy and ſimplicity of manners.

He found himſelf, it is true, in a chriſtian family; but it was a family noted for parricide. He ſaw biſhops at court; but theſe biſhops were haughty and inſolent, artful and cunning, and perpetually anathematizing one another. The two ſects of Arius and Athanaſius filled the empire with bloodſhed and confuſion; whereas the heathens, on the other hand, had no religious controverſies. We may therefore naturally ſuppoſe, that Julian, educated as he was by heathen philoſophers, and daily accuſtomed to hear their lectures, was thereby the more confirmed in that unhappy averſion to Chriſtianity, with which the abuſe of it had at firſt inſpired him. Politicians were no more ſurpriſed to ſee Julian forſake the chriſtian for the heathen religion, than to ſee Conſtantine abandon Paganiſm for Chriſtianity. It is probable, that both of them changed for reaſons of ſtate, and that theſe reaſons concurred with ſtoical pride in determining the mind of Julian. The heathen religion had no dogmas: it demanded nothing but ſacrifices; nor did it even require theſe under

very ſevere penalties, the prieſts not daring to form a religious government in the heart of the civil. Theſe and the like motives might eaſily induce a man of Julian's character to take a ſtep, which, in other reſpects, is ſo unjuſtifiable. He wanted a party: had he piqued himſelf merely on his ſtoical character, he would have had the prieſts and the falſe zealots of both religions to oppoſe him. The people would never have allowed a prince to confine himſelf to the ſole adoration of a pure Being, and to the practice of juſtice. He was, therefore, obliged to pitch upon one of theſe contending parties; and Julian probably ſubmitted to the pagan ceremonies with no more ſincerity than moſt princes and great men go to places of public worſhip, to which they are led by the people, and frequently forced to appear what they are not. The Turkiſh Sultan muſt bleſs Omar; the Perſian Sophi muſt bleſs Ali; and Marcus Aurelius himſelf was initiated in the Eleuſinian myſteries.

We ought not, therefore, to be ſurpriſed that Julian degraded his reaſon ſo far as to condeſcend to the obſervance of ſuperſtitious rites; but we cannot help being filled with the higheſt indignation at Theodoret, the only author who ſays that he ſacrificed a woman in the

temple of the Moon at Carres. This infamous ſtory deſerves to be ranked in the ſame catalogue with that abſurd fiction of Ammianus, who ſays that the genius of the empire appeared to Julian before his death; and with that no leſs ridiculous falſhood, that when Julian attempted to rebuild the temple of Jeruſalem, globes of fire iſſued from the earth, and deſtroyed the works and workmen.

Iliacos intra muros peccatur et extra.

The Chriſtians and Pagans have been equally induſtrious in inventing and propagating ſtories about Julian; with this only difference, that the ſtories of the chriſtians are all defamatory. Can any one believe, that a philoſopher could ſacrifice a woman to the moon, and tear out her intrails with his own hands? Can ſuch brutality dwell in the mind of a rigid Stoic?

Julian never put one Chriſtian to death. It is true he granted them no favours; neither did he perſecute them. As a juſt emperor, he left them to enjoy their eſtates: and as a philoſopher, he wrote againſt them. He forbade them to teach in their ſchools the works of prophane authors, which they endeavoured

to decry; but ſurely this was not perſecution. He allowed them the free exerciſe of their religion, and hindered them from deſtroying one another by their bloody quarrels. This was rather to be their protector. They ought, therefore, to load him with no other reproach than that of abandoning their religion, and of deceiving and hurting himſelf: and yet they have found means to render execrable to all poſterity a prince, whoſe name, but for his change of religion, the only blemiſh in his character, would have been dear to mankind.

OF

CEREMONIES.

THE arm-chair, the eaſy-chair, and court-ſtool, the right and the left hand, have for ſeveral ages been conſidered as important objects of policy, and illuſtrious ſubjects for diſputes. I fancy that the ancient ceremonial relating to arm-chairs, took its riſe from our barbarous anceſtors having but one of theſe chairs at moſt in a houſe, and that this was commonly appropriated to the uſe of any perſon who was ſick. There are ſtill ſeveral provinces in France, and counties in England, where the arm-chair is called a groaning-chair.

Long after the times of Attila and Dagobert, when luxury began to creep into courts, and that the great-ones of the earth had two or three arm-chairs in their mighty dungeons, it was eſteemed a ſingular mark of diſtinction to ſit on one of theſe thrones; and the maſter of a caſtle took care to have preſerved among

the records of his family, that having been to pay his court to ſuch a count, he had been received by him in an arm-chair.

We may read in the Memoirs of Mademoiſelle, ſiſter to Lewis XIV. that this auguſt princeſs paſſed at leaſt a fourt part of her life in mortal agonies, occaſioned by diſputes about eaſy chairs; and a whole court was taken up in caballing whether it was proper to ſit in a chair or a ſtool in ſuch or ſuch a room, or whether to ſit at all. At preſent our manners are more uniform; and ladies make uſe indifferently of couches or ſophas, without the peace of ſociety being diſturbed.

When cardinal Richelieu was negociating the marriage between Henrietta of France and Charles I. of England, with the ambaſſador of that nation, the affair was on the point of being broken off, on account of two or three ſteps nearer to a door that was claimed by the ambaſſador, till the cardinal, to get over the mighty difficulty, received him in bed; and this precious anecdote has been carefully preſerved in hiſtory. I am of opinion, that, if it had been propoſed to Scipio to place himſelf at his length naked between two ſheets to receive Hannibal's viſit, he would have thought it a droll ceremony.

One coach going before another, and what is called taking the way in a ſtreet or a road, has alſo been a mark of grandeur, and occaſioned claims, diſputes, and petty combats, for a whole century together; and it was eſteemed a ſignal victory for the equipage of one perſon to oblige that of another to yield the way. When foreign ambaſſadors paſſed through a ſtreet, it was like diſputing the prize in a circus; and if a Spaniſh miniſter made a Portugueſe coachman draw back his horſes, he immediately diſpatched a courier poſt-haſte to Madrid, to inform the king his maſter of the advantage he had gained.

In proportion as a nation is more or leſs barbarous, or the court weak or powerful, theſe ceremonies are more or leſs in vogue. True power and real politeneſs deſpiſe oſtentation.

It is probable that we ſhall one time or other ſee an end to the ridiculous cuſtom which ſtill prevails among the ambaſſadors of ſome courts, to beggar themſelves for the ſake of going in proceſſion through the ſtreets with a number of hired coaches, vamped up and new gilt, and preceded by a croud of ſervants walking on foot. This is called making their entry; and it is pleaſant enough to hear of a

perſon making his entry into a city ſeven or eight months after his arrival.

The important affair of the *punctilio*, which conſtitutes the grandeur of the modern Romans; the theory of the number of paces to be made in conducting a ſignor to the door at his departure; of taking the right or left hand of a perſon in a room; this noble art, I ſay, which would never have entered the heads of a Fabius or a Cato, begins now to give way; and the train-bearers to the cardinals lament, with tears in their eyes, that every thing ſeems to denounce a general lapſe of theſe eſſential ceremonials.

A French colonel happening to be at Bruſſels about a year ago, and not knowing how to ſpend his time, propoſed going to the public aſſembly. One of his acquaintance told him it was held at the houſe of a princeſs. With all my heart, replied the officer; but what of that? Why, princes go there. Are you a prince? Piſh, man! ſaid he, they are very good kind of princes: laſt year, when we took the town, I had a dozen of them waiting in my anti-chamber; they are the civileſt creatures breathing.

FOLLY ON BOTH SIDES.

FOLLY on both Sides is the true device of all diſputants and their diſputes. I do not ſpeak here of thoſe that have occaſioned blood-ſhed. The ruin and devaſtation ſpread through all Weſtphalia by the Anabaptiſts; the wars excited in France by the Calviniſts; the bloody factions of the Armagnacs * and the Burgundians; the puniſhment of the Maid of Orleans, whom one half of France revered as an heroine ſent from heaven, and the other half deteſted as a vile ſorcereſs; the petition of the Sorbonne to have her committed to the flames; the aſſaſſination of the duke of Orleans juſtified by the divines; a decree of the Sacred Faculty releaſing ſubjects from their oath of allegiance; the employing of executioners to maintain tenets and opinions; the kindling of fires to burn unhappy wretches

* The factions of Armagnac and Burgundy diſtinguiſhed the unfortunate reign of Charles VI. of France, and contributed in a great meaſure to the ſucceſs of the Engliſh in conquering the kingdom.

who were perſuaded to own themſelves magicians or heretics; all this ſurpaſſed folly: and here, by the way, let it be obſerved, that ſuch execrable doings were the growth of the age of purity, and the effects of Germanic good faith and Gaulic ſimplicity; to which I refer theſe honeſt people who are perpetually regretting paſt times.

And here I propoſe purely for my own edification, to draw up a ſhort memorandum of the curious matters that employed the attention and divided the opinions of our anceſtors.

In the eleventh century, that good time when we knew nothing of the art of war, though we were continually fighting, and were equally ignorant of police, trade, and the rules of ſociety; when we knew neither how to read or write; people of great parts engaged in ſolemn, long, and even ſharp diſputes, concerning what paſſed in the privy cloſet at the performing a certain office, which decency requires to be ſpoken of with the greateſt reſerve. This was called the diſpute of the Stercoriſts *; a diſpute which did not ex-

* The ſect of Stercoriſts were thoſe who maintained, that part of the ſacramental bread, when ſwallowed, was digeſted and converted to odure.

cite a war indeed, and was therefore on that account the moſt ſufferable of all the follies of the human mind.

The diſpute about the Moſarabic verſion, which engaged the attention of the learned kingdom of Spain in the ſame century, terminated likewiſe without occaſioning the deſolation of provinces, or the effuſion of blood. The ſpirit of chivalry, which reigned at that time, permitted no other method of clearing up this controverſy, but by referring it to the deciſion of two noble knights; and him of the two Don Quixotes who firſt threw his adverſary to the ground, was to eſtabliſh that verſion of which he was the champion. Don Ruis de Martanza, knight of the Moſarabic ritual, unhorſed the Don Quixote of the Latin ritual; but as the laws of noble chivalry did not poſitively determine that a ritual was to be proſcribed, becauſe its knight was unhorſed, they had recourſe to a more certain expedient (and which was then greatly in vogue) to determine which of the two books was to have the preference; and this was by throwing them both into the fire, when there was no doubt that the true ritual ‡ would come out unhurt.

‡ It was in the papacy of Gregory VII. that the Roman ſervice or Latin ritual was eſtabliſhed in Leon

But, I know not by what accident, they were both conſumed, and the diſpute remained undecided, to the great aſtoniſhment of the pious and learned Spaniards. By degrees the Latin ritual prevailed; and, if any knight had afterwards offered himſelf to defend the Moſarabic cauſe, the knight, and not the ritual, would have been thrown into the fire.

In theſe glorious times, we civilized people, when we were taken ill, were obliged to have recourſe to an Arabian phyſician; and, if we wanted to know the age of the moon, we muſt apply to the Arabians; if we had occaſion for a piece of cloath, it was to be purchaſed of a Jew; and when a huſbandman wanted rain, he addreſſed himſelf to a conjurer. But when in proceſs of time, we had learned Latin, and had gotten a miſerable tranſlation of Ariſtotle, we began to make a figure in the world, and for three or four hundred years employed ourſelves in explaining a few pages of the Stagyrite, in worſhipping them, and condemning them. Some have aſſerted, that but for him we had been deſtitute of the articles of faith;

and Caſtile, by the intrigues of Cardinal Hugo, ſurnamed the White, even after the preceding pope Alexander II. had declared, that the old Gothic liturgies were perfectly orthodox.

and others again as poſitively maintained that he was an Atheiſt. A Spaniard undertook to prove that Ariſtotle was a ſaint, and his nativity ought to be kept as a feſtival; a council in France condemned his divine writings to the flames; whole colleges, univerſities, and religious orders, have reciprocally anathematized each other on account of certain paſſages in this great man, which neither themſelves, the judges who interpoſed their authority, nor the author himſelf, underſtood. Many fiſty-cuffs were dealt on each ſide in Germany in conſequence of thoſe weighty diſputes; but very little or no blood was ſhed. It is a little unlucky for Ariſtotle's fame that there was no civil war raiſed, nor any pitched battle fought, in favour of the *Quiddities*, and *the Whole of the Part of the Thing*. Our anceſtors have cut each other's throats for controverſies of as little ſignification.

It is true indeed, that a very famous madman called Occam ‡, and ſurnamed the *Invin-*

‡ William Occam, a native of England, was a Cordelier, who lived in the fourteenth century, and had been a diſciple of Scot, whoſe doctrines he afterwards oppoſed. He was ſurnamed the *Invincible Doctor*, the *Singular Doctor*, and the *Venerable preceptor*. He eſpouſed the cauſe of Lewis of Bavaria, the declared enemy of the church

cible Doctor, the chief of thoſe who maintained *the Whole of a Part of the Thought*, deſired the emperor, Lewis of Bavaria, to draw the ſword of the empire in defence of his writings againſt one Scot, or *Scotus*, another madman, ſurnamed the *Subtile doctor*, who ſtickled for *the Whole of the Part of the Thing*. Happily Lewis of Bavaria kept his ſword in its ſcabbard. Who would imagine that theſe idle diſputes ſhould have continued even down to theſe latter ages; and that the parliament of Paris, in 1614, iſſued a curious decree in favours of Ariſtotle?

Much about the time of the doughty Occam and his intrepid rival Scot, there aroſe a diſpute of a more ſerious nature, in which the reverend fathers Cordeliers found means to engage the whole Chriſtian world; namely, whether they had a right to the porridge ‡ they

of Rome; and uſed to ſay to that prince, "Defend me with your ſword, "and I will ſupport you with my pen." He was accuſed of having taught, that neither Chriſt nor his apoſtles had any poſſeſſion, either in particular or in common. He wrote ſeveral tracts againſt the church of Rome, for which he was excommunicated; and the proteſtants ſometimes made uſe of his writings in their diſpute with the papal ſee.

‡ The regulations of the Cordeliers not permitting

eat, or were to be conſidered only as uſufructuaries. The form of the cowl and the depth of the ſleeve were alſo ſubjects of this holy war. Pope John XXII. having interfered in theſe diſputes, was ſoon made to know whom he had to deal with. The Cordeliers quitted him to ſide with Lewis of Bavaria, who then unſheathed his ſword. At that time three or four of theſe reverend diſputants were burnt as heretics. This was carrying the jeſt rather too far; but, however, as this affair never overturned thrones nor ruined whole ſtates, it may be ranked in the number of peaceable follies.

There has never been a want of theſe; but moſt of them have ſunk in ſilent oblivion; and of four or five hundred ſects that have, at different times, made their appearance, mankind retain the rememberance of ſuch only which have produced either exceſſive diſorders or exceſſive abſurdities; two things which are eaſily remembered. Who recollects at pre-

them to have any poſſeſſion of their own, pope Nicholas III. who had been of their order, reſolved to enrich them without hurting their delicacy. With this view he put them in poſſeſſion of great eſtates; but that the property of them ſhould be veſted in the church. This bull, however, was repealed by pope John XXII.

ſent that there were Orebites, Oſmites, or Inſdorſians? or knows any thing of the Cornacians or the Iſcariotiſts?

One day that I dined with a Dutch lady, I was charitably cautioned by one of the company to take care how I acted, and not to ſpeak in commendation of Voetius †. And pray why this caution? ſaid I. Becauſe, ſaid my friendly adviſer, the lady of the houſe is a Cocceian; adding that there were ſtill four of that ſect in Holland, and that it would be a great unhappineſs the race ſhould become ex-

† Geſbert Voet was, in the laſt century, a celebrated profeſſor of theology in the univerſity of Utrecht. He aſſiſted at the ſynod of Dordrecht, and from that time became a zealous defender of Calvin's doctrines. He wrote virulently againſt Des Cartes, John Cocceius, and Samuel Deſmarets, which laſt did not fail to retort his abuſe. John Henry Cocceius, or Coek, was a native of Bremen, and made ſuch great progreſs in the Greek tongue and theology, that he was choſen profeſſor of both at Francker, and afterwards removed to Leyden. He compiled a Hebrew dictionary, and wrote commentaries on the Old Teſtament, which are tedious, diffuſed, and chimerical. He pretends to have diſcovered many myſtical meanings in the Scripture, which had eſcaped all former critics, and was indeed a viſionary and enthuſiaſt. Voetius and Deſmarets called him an Innovator and Scriptuarian; and, in a word, he was but ſcurvily treated by his Proteſtant brethren.

tinct. A time will come, when the Janseniſts, who have made ſo much noiſe among us, and who are now hardly known, will ſhare the ſame fate with the Cocceians. An old doctor ſaid to me one day, Sir, in my younger days, I was a warm ſtickler for the *mandata impoſſibilia volentibus et conantibus*; I wrote againſt the formulary and the pope, and imagined myſelf a confeſſor; I was thrown into priſon, and looked upon myſelf as a martyr. At preſent I meddle with nothing, and think myſelf reaſonable. How do you employ yourſelf now? ſaid I. Sir, replied he, I am very fond of money. In this manner do the greateſt part of mankind, when they come to be old, laugh within themſelves at the follies that they eagerly run after in their youth. Sects grow old, like men. Thoſe which have not been ſupported by powerful princes, nor been the cauſe of great calamities, grow old ſooner than others. They are epidemic diſorders, which paſs off like the ſweating ſickneſs, or the hooping cough.

We no longer hear of the pious reveries of a Madame Guion; we no longer read the unintelligible jargon of the *Maxims of Saints*; but in its room Telemachus; we remember not the writings of the eloquent Boſſuet againſt

the ſoft, the elegant, the charming Fenelon, and only give the preference to his funeral orations. The whole of the controverſy about what was called *Quietiſm*, was nothing but the ſecond edition of the old ſtory of the good woman who carried a chafing-diſh of coals to ſet fire to heaven, and a pitcher of water to extinguiſh hell, that mankind might for the future ſerve God neither through fear nor hope. I ſhall only obſerve one ſingular inſtance in this affair, that fell ſhort of the ſtory of the good woman, which is, that the Jeſuits, who were ſo violently accuſed by the Janſeniſts as a body inſtituted by St. Ignatius on purpoſe to deſtroy the love of God, ſollicited the court of Rome in favour of the archbiſhop of Cambray's favourite tenet of true love. The ſame thing happened to him as did to Mr. de Langeais, who had an action brought againſt him in the parliament of Paris, by his wife, for impotency, and another in that at Rennes by a young girl, for having got her with child. One would think he muſt have been cleared upon one or other of the two indictments, and yet he was caſt in both. The doctrine of pure love, for which the Jeſuits beſtirred themſelves ſo violently, was condemned at Rome; and they themſelves paſſed with all Paris

for perſons who wanted to aboliſh the love of God. This opinion was ſo rooted in all minds, that ſome years ago, when they publiſhed for ſale a copper-plate repreſenting our Saviour in the dreſs of a Jeſuit, an arch wag (undoubtedly the *Louiſtik* of the Janſeniſts party) wrote theſe lines underneath:

Admirez l'artifice extreme
De ces peres ingenieux;
Ils vous ont habille comme eux,
Mon Dieu, de peur qu'on ne vous aime.

"How admirable is the artifice of theſe inge-
"nious Fathers! They have dreſſed our God
"like themſelves, for fear we ſhould be temp-
"ted to love him."

At Rome, which is never perplexed with diſputes of this kind, and to whoſe tribunal all thoſe of other places are referred, they ſoon began to grow weary of the controverſies about pure love. Cardinal Carpegne, who was one of the council in the archbiſhop of Cambray's affair, happened to be afflicted with a grievous diſorder in a certain part that is not more exempt from pains and maladies in a cardinal than in thoſe of a leſs ſacred character. His ſurgeon one day dreſſing him with ſome tents made of a fine cloth they call *Cam-*

bray * in Italy, as well as in many other parts, and putting him to ſome pain, his eminence roared out. Sure, ſaid the ſurgeon, it cannot hurt your eminency; it is ſoft Cambray. How! replied the cardinal, is Cambray got there too? Is it not enough that he has already almoſt turned my head? Happy the controverſies that end in this manner; happy for mankind, if all the diſputants and archheretics in the univerſe had ſubmitted with the ſame moderation and magnanimous compliance as the great archbiſhop of Cambray, who of all mankind had the leaſt inclination to be the leader of an hereſy. I know not whether he was right in wanting us to love God purely for his own ſake; but I am certain this amiable prelate highly merited to be loved in that manner.

In controverſies that are merely literary, there is often as much rancour and party ſpirit as in diſputes of the moſt intereſting nature to mankind. If it was poſſible, we ſhould ſee the factions of the circus revived amongſt us, that for ſo long a time diſtracted the Roman

* What we call cambrick. The difference of the termination in Engliſh will not allow us to preſerve the whole force of the play in the word that is in the French.

empire. Two rival actreſſes are capable of ſetting a whole city by the ears. Mankind have in general a ſecret diſpoſition to faction and party; and if they cannot cabal againſt, perſecute, or deſtroy each other, for crowns, tiaras, or mitres, they will fall out about a fidler or a dancer. Rameau has had a violent party againſt him who did all in their power to ruin him; but he knew nothing of it. I myſelf have had a party ſtill more violent againſt me, and I was very ſenſible of it.

OF

VAIN-GLORY:

BEING

The Subſtance of a CONVERSATION with a Chineſe.

IN the year 1723, there was a Chineſe in Holland, who was both a learned man and a merchant, two things that ought by no means to be incompatible; but which, thanks to the profound reſpect that is ſhewn to money, and the little regard that the human ſpecies do, and ever will, pay to merit, are become ſo among us.

This Chineſe, who ſpoke a little Dutch, happened to be in a bookſeller's ſhop, at the ſame time that ſome literati were aſſembled there. He aſked for a book; they offered him Boſſuet's Univerſal Hiſtory, badly tranſlated. At the title Univerſal Hiſtory, how pleaſed am I, cried the Oriental, to have met

with this book; I ſhall now ſee what is ſaid of our great empire; of a nation that has ſubſiſted for upwards of fifty thouſand years; of that long dynaſty of emperors who have governed us for ſuch a number of ages. I ſhall ſee what theſe Europeans think of the religion of our literati, and of that pure and ſimple worſhip we pay to the Supreme Being. What a pleaſure will it be to me to find how they ſpeak of our arts, many of which are of a more ancient date with us than the aeras of all the kingdoms of Europe! I fancy the author will be greatly miſtaken in relation to the war we had about twenty-two thouſand five hundred and fifty-two years ago, with the martial people of Tonquin and Japan, as well as the ſolemn ambaſſy that the powerful emperor of Mogulitan ſent, to requeſt a body of laws from us in the year of the world 500,000,000,000,079,123,450,000. Lord bleſs you, ſaid one of the literati, there is hardly any mention made of that nation in this book, it is too inconſiderable. Almoſt the whole of it is taken up with an account of the firſt nation of the world, the only nation, thoſe great people the Jews.

The Jews! ſaid the Chineſe; thoſe people then muſt certainly be maſters of three parts

of the globe at leaſt. They hope to be ſo one day, anſwered the other; but at preſent they are theſe pedlars that you ſee going about here with toys and knicknacks, and that ſometimes do us the honour to clip our gold and ſilver. Surely you are not ſerious, ſaid the Chineſe, could thoſe people ever have been in poſſeſſion of a vaſt empire? Here I joined in the converſation, and told him, that for a few years they were in poſſeſſion of a ſmall country to themſelves; but that we were not to judge of a people from the extent of their dominions, any more than of a man by his riches.

But does not this book take notice of ſome other nations, demanded the man of letters. Undoubtedly, replied a learned gentleman who ſtood at my elbow; it treats largely of a ſmall country about ſixty leagues wide, called Egypt, in which it is ſaid that there is a lake of one hundred and fifty leagues in circumference, made by the hands of man. My god! exclaimed the Chineſe, a lake of one hundred and fifty leagues in circumference, within a ſpot of ground only ſixty leagues wide! this is very curious. The inhabitants of that country, continued the doctor, were all ſages. What happy times were thoſe, cried the Chineſe! but is that all? No, replied the other, there is

mention made of thoſe famous people the Greeks. Greeks! Greeks! ſaid the Aſiatic, who are thoſe Greeks? Why, replied the philoſopher, they were maſters of a little province, about the two hundredth part as large as China, but whoſe fame ſpread over the whole world. Indeed! ſaid the Chineſe, with an air of openneſs and ingenuouſneſs, I declare I never heard the leaſt mention of theſe people, either in the Mogul's country, in Japan, or in great Tartary.

Oh, the barbarian, the ignorant creature! cried out our ſage, very politely. Why then I ſuppoſe you know nothing of Epaminondas the Theban, nor of the Piraean Haven, nor the names of Achilles's two horſes, nor of Silenus's aſs? You have never heard ſpeak of J[illegible]er, nor of Diogenes, nor of Lais, nor of Cybele, nor of ——

I am very much afraid, ſaid the learned Oriental, interrupting him, that you know nothing of that eternally memorable adventure of Xixofan Concochigramki, nor of the myſteries of the great Fi-pſi hi hi. But pray tell me what other unknown things does this Univerſal Hiſtory treat of? Upon this my learned neighbour harangued for a quarter of an hour together about the Roman republic, and when

he came to Julius Caeſar, the Chineſe ſtopped him, and very gravely ſaid, I think I have heard of him, was he not a Turk? *

How! cried our ſage in a fury, do not you ſo much as know the difference between Pagans, Chriſtians, and Mahometans? Did you never hear of Conſtantine? Do you know nothing of the hiſtory of the popes? We have heard ſomething confuſedly of one Mahomet, replied the Aſiatic.

It is impoſſible ſure, ſaid the other, but you muſt have heard at leaſt of Luther, Zuinglius, Bellarmin, and Oecolampadius. I ſhall never remember all thoſe names, ſaid the Chineſe; and ſo ſaying he quitted the ſhop, and went to ſell a large quantity of Pekoa tea, and fine callicoe, with which he bought two fine girls, and a young lad, and ſet ſail for his own country, adoring *Tien*, and recommending himſelf to Confucius.

As to myſelf, the converſation I had been witneſs to, plainly diſcovered to me the nature of vain-glory; and I could not forbear exclaiming, Since Caeſar and Jupiter are names unknown to the fineſt, moſt ancient, moſt ex-

* Not long ſince the Chineſe took all the Europeans to be Mahometans.

tenſive, moſt populous, and moſt civilized kingdom in the univerſe, it becomes you well, O ye rulers of petty ſtates! ye pulpit orators of a narrow pariſh, or a little town! ye doctors of Salamanca, or of Bourges! ye trifling authors, and ye heavy commentators! It becomes you well, indeed, to aſpire at reputation.

OF

SUICIDE,

OR,

SELF-MURDER.

PHILIP MORDAUNT, couſin-german to the famous earl of Peterborough, who was ſo well known in all the courts of Europe, and who had made his boaſt that he had ſeen more poſtilions, and more crowned heads, than any other man in the world; this Philip Mordaunt, I ſay, was a young man about twenty-ſeven, handſome, well-made, rich, and of an illuſtrious family, and one who might pretend to any thing; and, what was more than all the reſt, he was paſſionately beloved by his miſtreſs. However, this man took a diſtaſte to life, diſcharged all that he owed, wrote to his friends to take leave of them, and even compoſed ſome verſes upon the occaſion, which

concluded thus, that " though opium might be ſome relief to a wiſe man, if diſguſted with the world, yet in his opinion a piſtol, and a little reſolution, were much more effectual remedies." His behaviour was ſuitable to his principles; and he diſpatched himſelf with a piſtol, without giving any other reaſon for it than that his ſoul was weary of his body, and that when we diſlike our houſe we ought to quit it. One would imagine he choſe to die, becauſe he was weary of being happy.

One Richard Smith has lately exhibited a moſt extraordinary inſtance of this nature to the world. This Smith was tired of being really unhappy: he had been rich, and was reduced to poverty: he had been healthy, and was become infirm: he had a wife, to whom he had nothing to give but a ſhare in his misfortunes: and an infant in the cradle was the only thing he had left. Richard Smith and his wifeBridget then, after having affectionately embraced, and given each a formal kiſs to their child, firſt cut the poor little creature's throat, and then hanged themſelves at the foot of their bed. I do not remember, to have heard any where of ſuch a ſcene of horrors committed in cold blood; but the letter which theſe unhappy wretches wrote to their

couſin Mr. Brindley before their death, is as remarkable as the manner itſelf of their death. "We are certain, ſaid they, of meeting with forgiveneſs from God, etc. We put an end to our lives becauſe we were miſerable, without any proſpect of relief; and we have done our child that ſervice to put it out of life, for fear it ſhould have been as miſerable as ourſelves, etc." It is to be obſerved, that theſe people, after having murdered their child out of their paternal affection, wrote to a friend, recommending their dog and cat to his care. They thought, probably, that it was eaſier to make their dog and cat happy in this world than their child, and that the keeping them would not be any great expence to their friend *.

The earl of Scarborough has lately quitted life with the ſame indifference as he did his place of maſter of the horſe. Having been told in the houſe of lords that he ſided with the court, on account of the profitable poſt he held in it, My lords, ſaid he, to convince you

* Richard Smith was a bookbinder, and priſoner for debt within the liberty of the king's-bench; and this ſhocking tragedy was acted in the year 1732. Smith, and his wife, had been always induſtrious and frugal, invincibly honeſt, and remarkable for conjugal affection.

that my opinion is not influenced by any ſuch conſideration, I will inſtantly reſign. He afterwards found himſelf perplexed between a miſtreſs he was fond of, but to whom he was under no engagements, and a woman whom he eſteemed, and to whom he had made a promiſe of marriage. My lord Scarborough, therefore, killed himſelf to get rid of a difficulty †.

The many tragical ſtories of this nature, with which the Engliſh news-papers abound, have made the greateſt part of Europe imagine, that the Engliſh are fonder of killing themſelevs than any other people: and yet I queſtion much whether there are not as many madmen at Paris as at London; and if our newspapers were to keep an exact regiſter of thoſe who have either had the folly, or unhappy reſolution to deſtroy themſelves, we might in this reſpect be found to vye with the Engliſh. But our compilers of news are more prudent; the adventures of private perſons are never ſet forth to public ſcandal in any of the papers li-

† Lord S——h's immediate motive for ſuicide was ſaid to be remorſe for having weakly diſcovered to a lady a ſecret of ſtate, intruſted to him by his ſovereign: but in truth it ſeems to have been the effect of a temporary delirium, owing to a conſtitutional diſorder.

cenſed by the government: however, I believe I may venture to affirm, that this rage of ſuicide will never become epidemical. Nature has ſufficiently guarded againſt it, and hope and fear are the powerful curbs ſhe makes uſe of to ſtop the hand of the wretch uplifted to be his own executioner.

I know it may be ſaid, that there have been countries where a council was eſtabliſhed to give licence to a people to kill themſelves, when they could give ſufficient reaſons for doing it. To this I anſwer, that either the fact is falſe, or that ſuch council found very little employment.

There is one thing indeed which may cauſe ſome ſurprize, and which I think deſerves to be ſeriouſly diſcuſſed, which is, that almoſt all the great heroes among the Romans, during the civil wars, killed themſelves when they loſt a battle, and that we do not find an inſtance of a ſingle leader, or great man, in the diſputes of the League, the Fronde, or during the troubles of Italy and Germany, who put an end to his life with his own hand. It is true, that theſe latter were Chriſtians, and that there is a great difference between a Chriſtian ſoldier and a Pagan; and yet, how comes it that theſe very men who were ſo eaſily with-held

by Chriſtianity, from putting an end to their own lives, ſhould be reſtrained either by that or any other conſideration, when they had a mind to poiſon, aſſaſſinate, or publicly execute a vanquiſhed enemy? Does not the Chriſtian religion forbid this manner of taking away the life of a fellow creature, if poſſible more than that of our own? The advocates for ſuicide tell us, that it is very allowable to quit our houſe when we are weary of it. Agreed: but moſt men had rather lie in a bad houſe, than ſleep in the open fields.

I one day received a circulatory letter from an Engliſhman, in which he propoſes a premium to the perſon who ſhould the moſt clearly demonſtrate that it was allowable for a man to kill himſelf. I made him no anſwer, for I had nothing to prove to him, and he had only to examine within himſelf if he preferred death to life.

But then let us aſk, why Cato, Brutus, Caſſius, Antony, Otho, and ſo many others, gave themſelves death with ſo much reſolution, and that our leaders of parties ſuffered themſelves to be taken alive by their enemies, or waſte the remains of a wretched old age in a dungeon? Some refined wits pretend to ſay, that the ancients had no real courage; that

Cato acted like a coward in putting an end to his own life; and that he would have ſhewed more greatneſs of ſoul in crouching beneath the victorious Caeſar. This may be very well in an ode, or as a figure in rhetoric; but it is very certain there muſt be ſome courage to reſign a life coolly by the edge of a ſword, ſome ſtrength of mind thus to overcome the moſt powerful inſtinct of nature: in a word, that ſuch an act ſhews a greater ſhare of verocity than weakneſs. When a ſick man is in a phrenzy, we cannot ſay he has no ſtrength, though we may ſay it is the ſtrength of a madman.

Self-murder was forbid by the Pagan as well as by the Chriſtian religion. There was even a place allotted in hell to thoſe who put an end to their own lives. Witneſs theſe lines of the poet.

Proxima deinde tenent mœſti loca, qui ſibi lethum
Inſontes peperere manu, lucemque peroſi
Projecere animas; quam vellent æthere in alto
Nunc et pauperiem, et duros perferre labores!
Fata obſtant, triſtique Palus inamabilis unda
Adligat, et novies Styx interfuſa coercet.

VIRG. Æn. lib. vi. v. 434, etc.

Then crowds ſucceed, who, prodigal of breath,
Themſelves anticipate the doom of death;

Tho' free from guilt, they caſt their lives away,
And ſad and ſullen hate the golden day.
Oh! with what joy the wretches now would bear
Pain, toil, and woe, to breathe the vital air!
In vain! by fate for ever are they bound
With dire Avernus, and the lake profound;
And Styx with nine wide channels roars around.

PITT.

This was the religion of the heathens; and notwithſtanding the torments they were to meet with in the other world, it was eſteemed an honour to quit this by giving themſelves death by their own hands; ſo contradictory are the manners of men! Is not the cuſtom of duelling ſtill unhappily accounted honourable amongſt us, though prohibited by reaſon, by religion, and by all laws divine and human? If Cato and Caeſar, Antony and Auguſtus, did not challenge each other to a duel, it was not that they were leſs brave than ourſelves. If the duke of Montmerenci, marechal Marillac, de Thou, Cinq-Mars, and many others, rather choſe to be dragged to execution like the vileſt miſcreants, than put an end to their own lives like Cato and Brutus, it was not that they had leſs courage than thoſe Romans: the true reaſon is, that it was not then the faſhion at Paris to kill one's ſelf on ſuch

occaſions; whereas it was an eſtabliſhed cuſtom with the Romans.

The women on the Malabar coaſt throw themſelves alive into the flames, in which the bodies of their dead huſbands are burning. Is it becauſe they have more reſolution than Cornelia? No; but the cuſtom of the country is for wives to burn themſelves.

Cuſtom and fancy of our fate decide,
And what is this man's ſhame is t' other's pride.

ON

FANATICISM.

GEOMETRY has not always the property of beſtowing a juſt way of thinking on thoſe who cultivate that ſcience. Into what precipices may one not fall with thoſe outlines of reaſon? A famous Proteſtant, who was reckoned one of the firſt mathematicians of his age, and who trod in the ſteps of Newton, Leibnitz, and Bernouilli, took it into his head, ſome years ſince, to draw ſome very odd corollaries. It has been ſaid, that with one grain of faith one might remove mountains; this perſon, by an analyſis wholly geometrical, ſays to himſelf, "I have many grains of faith, therefore I ought to do ſomething more than remove mountains." This was he who made his appearance in London in 1707, accompanied with ſome learned perſons, and even ſome of them very ſenſible men. He gave out publickly, that he would raiſe a dead perſon to life in any church-yard they ſhould

think proper. Their reaſonings were always by ſyntheſis. They argued thus: The true diſciples muſt certainly work miracles, and we are true diſciples; ergo, we can do any thing we pleaſe. Simple ſaints of the church of Rome, who were wholly ignorant of geometry, have raiſed a great number of dead; therefore, *a fortiori*, we who are the reformers of the reformed muſt certainly be able to raiſe whom we pleaſe.

It is impoſſible to anſwer ſuch arguments; they are all according to the ſtricteſt rules of the ſchools. Here then is what has deluged antiquity with prodigies. Hence we may account for the temples of Eſculapius being always full of votive tablets, and every pillar of it hung round with the crouches of the lame, and the pictures of cures performed, with the images of little children in ſilver, as big as the life; in ſhort, every thing was miraculous.

In a word, our famous proteſtant geometrician, that I am ſpeaking of, was ſo much in earneſt, that he poſitively aſſured the public he would raiſe the dead; and this plauſible propoſal made ſuch an impreſſion on the populace, that queen Anne was obliged to appoint a day, an hour, and a church-yard, in the option of the adept, where he might perform

his miracle in a proper manner in the preſence of the magiſtracy. Our geometrical apoſtle made choice of St. Paul's Cathedral to exhibit his holy art. The people lined the place, and ſoldiers were planted to keep the dead and living in order. The magiſtrates took their ſeats; and the recorder wrote every circumſtance of the tranſactions in the public archives. One cannot be too exact to uſe too many precautions where miracles are concerned. A body was therefore taken up in preſence of the ſaint, ſuch as he was pleaſed to direct. He prayed, fell on his knees, made a thouſand holy contortions, in which he was followed by his companions — but in vain; the deceaſed gave not the ſmalleſt ſign of life, ſo that they were forced to carry him back to his hole, and content themſelves with ſome ſlight puniſhment of the raiſer of the departed and his adherents. I have ſince ſeen one of thoſe poor fellows; he owned to me that ſome one of them had been tainted with a little matter of venial ſin, which the departed had diſcovered; and that, had it not been for this, the reſurrection had moſt infallibly taken place.

Were it lawful to blaze abroad ought to the diſcredit of thoſe to whom the public owes the greateſt and moſt ſincere reſpect, I ſhould

now be tempted to ſay, that Newton, the great Newton himſelf, has diſcovered in the Revelations that the pope is antichriſt, with abundance of the ſame ſort of ſtuff: I verily think I ſhould call him an Arian in good earneſt. I am ſenſible this weakneſs of Newton is to that of our other geometrician as an unit is to an infinite number. There is certainly no kind of compariſon. But what a wretched ſet of beings muſt the human ſpecies be, when ſuch a man as the immortal Newton could perſuade himſelf he ſaw the preſent hiſtory of Europe in the Apocalypſe!

It would ſeem that ſuperſtition is an epidemical kind of diſorder, and from which the brighteſt minds, and even freethinkers, are not wholly exempt. There are in Turky perſons of extreme good ſenſe, who would ſuffer empaling alive for certain opinions of *Aboubeker*. Theſe principles once admitted to be juſt, their other arguments are certainly very concluſive. The Navaricians, the Radoriſts, and the Jabariſts, damn each other mutually, by mere ſubtile and cobweb arguments; they all of them draw very plauſible conſequences; though none of them have the courage to examine the principles on which thoſe arguments are founded.

A report is ſpread abroad in the world, that there is a giant ſeventy feet high; immediately the doctors in a body examine what the colour of his hair ought to be, together with the dimenſions of his thumb, and the breadth of his nails. There is nothing but outcries, caballing, and diſputes. They who maintain that the little finger of the giant is no more than fifteen lines in diameter, condemn ſuch as affirm the little finger to be a foot thick to the flames. "But, for heaven's ſake, gentlemen, are you ſure there is ſuch a monſter in being as this giant?" ſays a by-ſtander, with great modeſty. "What a blaſphemous doubt!" cry all the diſputants, "what an impious abſurdity!" Thus they come to a pious concluſion to ſtone this by-ſtander; and after having murdered him in the moſt orthodox and edifying manner imaginable, they fall together by the ears, according to cuſtom, about the myſtery of the nails and the little finger.

ON

DEISM.

DEISM is a religion which is diffuſed through all religions, a metal which mixes and unites with all other metals, and whoſe veins penetrate under ground to the extremities of the univerſe. This mine lies nearer the ſurface, and is more worked in China than in other parts; every where elſe it lies concealed, and is a ſecret wholly unknown to any but the true adepts.

There is no country where thoſe adepts abound more than in England. In the laſt century there were even ſome atheiſts in that kingdom, as well as in France and Italy. What chancellor Bacon ſaid has been fulfilled to a tittle, That a ſmattering of philoſophy makes one an atheiſt, but that a profound application to it leads to the the knowlege of a God. At the time that men believed with Epicurus, that chance governs every thing, or with Ariſtotle,

and even with ſeveral other ancient divines, that every thing owes its being to corruption, and that, with the help of a little matter and motion, the world went very well of itſelf, it was then poſſible for a man to have diſbelieved a providence. But, after having a nearer view of nature, which the ancients never ſaw at all; after diſcovering that all matter is organized, and that every thing contains the principles of propagation; after a full conviction that a muſhroom is as much the production of infinite wiſdom as the ſyſtem of the univerſe; thinking perſons have fallen to adoring where their predeceſſors blaſphemed. Natural philoſophers are become the champions of a providence. A catechiſt announces a God to children, whilſt a Newton is demonſtrating its exiſtence to the ſages of the world.

Many have been deſirous to know, whether deiſm, conſidered in itſelf, and without any religious ceremonies, can properly be called a religion. The anſwer is evident: He who only acknowleges a creating God, he who conſiders God only as a being infinitely powerful, and who ſees nothing in his creatures but machines of an admirable contrivance; can no more be ſaid to have a right ſenſe of religion towards him, than an European, who ſhould

admire the power of an emperor of China, would be, for that reaſon only, a ſubject of that prince: but he who is perſuaded that God has been pleaſed to create a certain relation between himſelf and his creatures; that is, between himſelf and men, whom he has made free, capable of good and evil, and who hath beſtowed on them all that faculty of right reaſon, which is properly the inſtinct of man, and on which is founded the law of nature; this perſon is certainly under the power of true religion, and a religion at leaſt infinitely ſuperior to all thoſe of the ſects who are not of our communion; for all thoſe ſects are in the wrong, whereas the law of nature is undoubtedly, ſo far as it goes, perfectly right: even our revealed religion neither is nor can be any other than right reaſon as yet unaided by revelation, whereas the other religions are only good ſenſe perverted by ſuperſtition.

All the ſects differ from one another, becauſe they are of man: whereas morality is every-where the ſame, becauſe it proceeds from God.

It has been aſked, Why, of five or ſix hundred different ſects, there has not been one that has not been the occaſion of bloodſhed? And that the Deiſts, who are ſo numerous in

all parts, have never occaſioned the ſmalleſt diſturbance? the reaſon is, that they were philoſophers. Now philoſophers may, in all likelihood, be guilty of falſe reaſoning, but never engage in intrigues of ſtate; ſo that they who perſecute philoſophers, on pretence that their opinions may prove dangerous to the public, are full as abſurd as a man would be, who ſhould imagine the ſtudy of algebra might poſſibly raiſe the price of corn at market. A thinking being, who is in an error, is an object of pity, and his perſecutor a dangerous ideot and a madman. We are all ſons of one parent; and ſhould any of my brothers, who is full of filial reſpect, and animated with a charity truly fraternal, think proper to pay his reſpects to our Common Father after a different manner from me, am I therefore to cut his throat?

After all, what is a true Deiſt? One who ſays to God, "I adore and love thee;" one who ſays to a Turk, a Chineſe, an Indian, and to a Ruſſian, "I love thee."

But perhaps he doubts of Mahomet's voyage to the Moon, and accordingly makes bold to ſuppreſs one half of it, at leaſt in his own private opinion; he does not inſiſt his wife ſhould leap into the fire on his death, out of pure

devotion. Sometimes too he may be tempted to think the hiſtory of the eleven thouſand virgins, and that of St. Amable, whoſe hat and gloves were carried to Rome on a ſun-beam, a little dubious. In every other reſpect he may be a very honeſt man. Noah would certainly have admitted him into the ark; Numa Pompilius into his council; he would have rode on the car of Zoroaſter, philoſophized with Plato, Ariſtippus, Cicero, and Atticus. But tell me, do you think he would not have had a ſip of the hemlock with Socrates?

ON THE

CONTRADICTIONS of this WORLD.

THE more one knows this world of ours, the more contradictions and inconſiſtencies ſhall we find in it. To begin with the Grand Turk; he is under an indiſpenſible neceſſity to cut off the head of every one who gives him the leaſt grounds of diſpleaſure, and is at the ſame time hardly able to preſerve his own.

If from the Grand Turk we paſs to St. Peter; his holineſs confirms the election of emperors, has kings for his vaſſals, but is not more powerful than a duke of Savoy. He ſends his commands into America and the Eaſt Indies; yet is he not able to take away one privilege from the republic of Lucca. The emperor is king of the Romans; but his whole right and prerogative conſiſts in holding the pope's ſtirrup, and the baſon for him to waſh in at maſs.

The Engliſh ſerve their monarch on the

knee; but then they deſpoſe, impriſon, and cut off his head on a ſcaffold.

Men who have made a vow of poverty, obtain, even by virtue of that vow, an eſtate of two hundred thouſand crowns yearly revenue; and, in conſequence of their humility, become abſolute ſovereigns.

At Rome they rigorouſly condemn pluralities of benefices, with cure of ſouls; while at the ſame inſtant they will iſſue out bulls to ſome German to enable him to hold half a dozen biſhoprics at once. It is, ſay they, becauſe the German biſhops have no church cures. The chancellor of France is the ſecond perſon in the ſtate, and yet he is never permitted to eat at the king's table; at leaſt, it has never happened hitherto: while a colonel, who is ſcarce a gentleman, enjoys that honour. An intendant's lady is a queen in her huſband's province, and at court no more than a ſimple country madam.

They who are convicted of that heinous ſin of non-conformity, are publicly burnt; whilſt the ſecond eclogue of Vigil, in which is that warm declaration of love which Corydon makes the beauteous Alexis, *Formoſum paſtor Corydon ardebat Alexin*, is gravely expounded in every college; and they are even at abun-

dance of pains to cauſe their pupils to take notice that though Corydon was fair, and Amyntas ſwarthy, yet ſtill Amyntas might juſtly claim the preference.

Should a poor harmleſs philoſopher, who never dreamed of doing the leaſt harm to any one, take it into his head to imagine that the earth moves, that light comes from the ſun, or that matter might poſſibly have ſome other properties beſides thoſe we are yet acquainted with, immediately the hue and cry is raiſed againſt him as an impious diſturber of the public tranquility, notwithſtanding his perſecutors have tranſlated and publiſhed, *in uſum delphini*, Lucretius and Cicero's Tuſculane Queſtions, which are two complete bodies of irreligion.

Our courts of juſtice have now rejected all belief of perſons poſſeſſed with evil ſpirits, and witches are ſubjects of laughter; but Gaufredy and Grandier were both burnt for witchcraft; and lately, by a majority of voices, a monk was condemned to the ſtake by one of our parliaments, for having bewitched a young damſel of eighteen years by breathing upon her.

The ſceptical philoſophy of Bayle was even perſecuted in Holland. La Motte le Vayer, ſtill a greater ſceptic, though not near ſo good

a philoſopher, was preceptor to Lewis XIV. and his brother. Gourville was hanged in effigy at Paris, whilſt he was the ambaſſador of France in Germany.

The famous atheiſt Spinoſa lived and died in peace. Vanini, whoſe only crime was writing againſt Ariſtotle, was burnt for an atheiſt: in his quality he has had the honour to make a conſiderable article in the hiſtory of the republic of letters, as well as in all the dictionaries, thoſe enormous archives of lies, with ſo ſmall a mixture of truth. Do but open thoſe books, you will there find it recorded that Vanini not only taught atheiſm in his writings, but alſo that twelve profeſſors of the ſame creed had actually ſet out from Naples with deſign to make proſelytes to their goſpel in all parts; then open Vanini's books, you will be aſtoniſhed to find they contain nothing but ſo many proofs of the exiſtence of a deity. See here what he ſays in his Amphitheatrum, a work condemned upon truſt, becauſe it is wholly unknown: "God is his own ſole principle and boundary, without end, without beginning, having no need of either; and the father of all beginning and of every end; he exiſts for ever, but in no ſpace of time; with regard to time, there is no duration, *a parte*

ante, that is to ſay, which is paſt, nor futurity which will come hereafter; he is preſent every where without occupying any place; immoveable, yet without ſtopping, and rapid without motion; he is all, but without one excluſive of all; he is in every thing, but without being confined; and without every thing, but without being excluded from other beings; good, without quality; a whole, without parts; and, whilſt he produces all the various changes in nature, he is himſelf unvaried and immutable; his will is in his power; he is ſimplicity itſelf; there is no ſuch thing as mere poſſibility, all in him is real; he is the firſt, the middle, and the laſt act; in one word, he is all, yet is he above all kings, without them, within them, beyond them, eternally before them, yet preſent with them." After ſuch a confeſſion of his faith, was Vanini denounced an atheiſt. Yet what could the grounds for this condemnation be? The ſimple depoſition of a fellow called Francon. In vain did his works bear witneſs in his favour. A ſingle enemy robbed him of his life and reputation, at leaſt all over Europe, at the ſame time.

The little book, called the *Cymbalum Mundi*, which is no more than a cold imitation of Lucian, and which has not the ſlighteſt or

moſt diſtant relation to Chriſtianity, has in like manner been condemned to the flames; yet Rabelais has been printed *cum privilegio*, and the Turkiſh Spy, and even the Perſian Letters*, have been ſuffered to paſs unmoleſted, particularly the latter, that ingenious, diverting, and daring performance which contains an intire letter in defence of ſuicide; another in which are theſe words; "If we ſuppoſe ſuch a thing as religion;" another where it is ſaid in expreſs terms, that the biſhops have properly no other function, but that of diſpenſing with the laws; in a word, another which calls the pope a magician, who endeavours to perſuade us that three and one are the ſame; that the bread we eat is no bread, etc. The abbe de St. Pierre, a man who might poſſibly be deceived, but who has conſtantly kept the public good in ſight in all his writings, and whoſe works cardinal Du Bois uſed to call the Dreams of a good Citizen; this abbe de St. Pierre, I ſay, was excluded from the French Academy, *nemine contradicente*, for having, in a political work, preferred the eſtabliſhment of boards of council to the inſtitution of ſecretaries of ſtate; and for ſaying, that the finan-

* By the Baron do Monteſquieu.

ces had been ſhamefully managed towards the cloſe of that glorious reign. The author of the Perſian Letters made mention of Lewis XIV. only that he might have an opportunity to tell the world that the king was a magician, who undertook to perſuade his ſubjects that paper was gold and ſilver; that he preferred the Turkiſh to all other forms of government; that he held a man who handed him a napkin in higher eſteem than one who had won him battles; that he had given a penſion to a perſon who had fled a matter of two leagues from the field of battle without once looking behind him, and a conſiderable government to one who had run four; that he was miſerably poor, notwithſtanding he ſays, in the ſame letter, that his finances are inexhauſtible. Let us further ſee what the ſame author, in the only book of his then known, had ſaid of Lewis XIV. the protector of the French Academy; and it is on the reputation he acquired by this book, he was admitted into their number. We may add to this, what crowns the inconſiſtency, that this company received him amongſt them chiefly for making them ridiculous; for of all the books which authors have made themſelves merry at the expence of their company, there is none where they are worſe

handled than in the Perſian Letters. Conſult the letter in which it is ſaid; "The members who compoſe this body, have no other employment but to prate everlaſtingly; and panegyric flows naturally out of that babbling of theirs, which is truly world without end," etc. After treating that body in ſuch a manner, they very complaiſantly praiſed him for his addreſs in drawing a ſtrong likeneſs.

Were I diſpoſed to examine the contrarieties to be met with in the republic of letters, I muſt write the hiſtory of the literati, and of all the wits who have ever had a being: in like manner, had I a mind to enter into a detail of all the inconſiſtencies to be found in human ſociety, I ſhould be obliged to write no leſs than a hiſtory of the whole human race. An inhabitant of Aſia, who ſhould travel into Europe, might take us all for Pagans. The very days of the week with us bear the names of Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, and Venus; the marriage of Cupid and Pſyche are painted in a palace belonging to the pope; but eſpecially ſhould this Aſiatic be at one of our operas, he could have no manner of doubt but it was a feſtival in honour of the Heathen Gods. Were he to inform himſelf more exactly in what regarded our manners, he would be under much

greater aſtoniſhment: he would find a law ſubſiſting in Spain, by which all foreigners are excluded from the ſmalleſt commerce, directly or indirectly, with their American ſettlements, whilſt thoſe very foreigners carry on, by means of Spaniſh factors, a trade to the amount of fifty millions *per annum*; ſo that Spain could never grow rich, were it not for the violation of that law, which is ſtill in being, though perpetually trampled upon: he would ſee the government in another country encouraging an India company, though their theologians had declared their dividends criminal before God: he would ſee the right of judging their fellow-ſubjects, the command of their armies in time of war, with the quality of counſellors of ſtate, bought with money: he would never be able to comprehend how it ſhould be mentioned in the patents which intitle them to hold thoſe places, that they have been granted, without caballing, fee, or reward, and purely on the ſcore of merit, whilſt the valuable conſideration is attached to their letters of proviſion. Would not our Aſiatic be ſurpriſed to ſee our players at the ſame inſtant paid by the ſovereign and excommunicated by the clergy? He would aſk, why a lieutenant general, who is only a *roturier*, or man of the common

caſs, though he may have won battles, ſhall, in the eſtimation of the *taille*, be ranked with a peaſant; whilſt an *Echevin*, or city ſheriff*, ſhall be held as noble as the Montmorenci's? Why, during the time that all regular ſhows are prohibited in a week which is conſecrated to edification, they allow of montebanks, whoſe language is offenſive to the leaſt delicate ear? He would ſee almoſt all our laws in direct oppoſition to our cuſtoms; and were we to travel into Aſia, we ſhould find pretty near the ſame inconſiſtencies.

Men are every-where alike fools: they make laws after much ſuch a manner as we repair breaches in walls. In one place the elder brothers have done all in their power to leave their younger mere beggars; in others they ſhare all alike. At one time the church authorizes duels, at another ſhe anathematizes them. The partizans and enemies of Ariſtotle have been excommunicated in their turn, ſo have the wearers of long and ſhort hair. There has not in the known world any law been diſcovered that has been able to redreſs a very ſilly piece of folly, which is gaming. The laws of play are

* This ridiculous cuſtom has been at length aboliſhed in 1751. The lieutenant-generals are now declared as noble as the echevins.

the only ones which admit of neither exception, relaxation, impoſition, nor variation. A fellow that has been a lackey, if he plays at *lanſquenet* with a king, and happens to win, is paid without the leaſt heſitation: in every other reſpect, the law is a ſword, with which the ſtronger cuts the weaker in pieces.

Yet the world ſubſiſts as if it were conſtituted in the wiſeſt manner imaginable. Irregularity is attached to our natures; our political world is much like our globe, though ſomething hideous, it yet preſerves itſelf. It would be folly to wiſh, that all the mountains, ſeas, and rivers, were drawn in regular geometrical figures: it would be a piece of ſtill greater folly to require ſuch a thing as conſummate wiſdom from men; it would be to give wings to dogs, or horns to eagles.

OF

JOHN LAW, MELON, and DUTOT.

ON

COMMERCE and LUXURY.

COMMERCE has been better underſtood in France within theſe twenty years, than it had ever before been from the reign of Pharamond to that of Lewis XIV. Before this period it was a ſecret art, a kind of chymiſtry in the hands of three or four perſons, who actually made gold, but without communicating the ſecret by which they had been enriched. The body of the nation were in ſuch profound ignorance of this important ſecret, that we had neither miniſter nor magiſtrate that knew what the words *annuities*, *principal*, *exchange*, or *dividend*, meant. It was deined, that a Scotchman called John Law ſhould come into France, and overturn the whole oecono-

my of our government to inſtruct us. He had the courage, in the moſt horrible confuſion of our finances, and in the time of a moſt dreadful famine, to eſtabliſh a bank, and an India company. This was giving a vomit to the ſick; we took too much, and convulſions were the conſequence: but at length, from the ruins of his ſyſtem, we had left us an India company, with a capital amounting to fifty millions of livres. What had been the caſe had we taken a moderate doſe of that ſalutary medicine? in my opinion the ſtate had certainly been the moſt vigorous and powerful in the whole world.

There prevailed ſtill among us, at the time when the preſent India company was eſtabliſhed, a prejudice ſo very ſtrong, that the Sorbonne declared the ſharing the dividend of actions uſurious. In the very ſame manner, the German painters, who came to eſtabliſh their art in France, were in 1570 accuſed of witchcraft.

We Frenchmen, there is no denying it, have come very late into every thing. Our firſt ſteps in the arts have been to thwart the introduction of thoſe truths which came to us from abroad: we defended theſes againſt the circulation of the blood, after it had been de-

monſtrated in England; againſt the revolution of the earth, which had been made evident in Germany: not even the moſt ſalutary remedies have eſcaped being proſcribed by an arret. To diſcover any new truths, to propoſe any thing of general uſe to mankind, is a ſure ſtep to perſecution. John Law, that Scotchman to whom we owe our India company, and all we know of commerce, was driven out of France, and died in miſery at Venice; and yet, notwithſtanding we had ſcarce three hundred merchant ſhips of any burden when he propoſed his ſyſtem *, we have now upwards of eighteen hundred. Though we owe them all to him, we are exceedingly ungrateful to the memory of our benefactor.

The principles of commerce are known at preſent to all the world: we are beginning to have good books on that ſubject. The eſſay *Sur le Commerce* of Melon, is the work of a man of ſenſe, a good citizen, and an excellent philoſopher: it has a tincture of the ſpirit of that age; and I do not think that even in the time of M. Colbert, there were two perſons in France capable to compoſe ſuch a work. There are, notwithſtanding, a number of errors in

* This was written in 1738.

that excellent book; ſo great a progreſs as he has made in the road to truth was no eaſy matter: it is a piece of ſervice done the public to point out the miſtakes that happen in an uſeful book. It is indeed in ſuch only we ought to look for them. It is ſhewing reſpect to a good work to contradict it; a bad piece does not deſerve the honour.

The following obſervations are ſuch as ſeem contrary to truth.

I. He ſays thoſe countries in which are the greateſt number of beggars, are the moſt barbarous. I believe there is no city more civilized than Paris, and where at the ſame time there are more beggars. This is a vermin that attach themſelves to riches: the drones run from the extremities of the kingdom to Paris, in order to lay opulence and good-nature under contribution. This is an abuſe difficult to root out, but which proves only that there are wretches in ſuch a country, who prefer begging to getting their livelihood by their honeſt induſtry This may be a proof of wealth and negligence, but by no means of barbarity.

II. He repeats in ſeveral places that Spain would be more powerful without America. He grounds his obſervations on the depopulation of Spain, and on the weakneſs under

which that ſtate had long languiſhed. This notion of America weakening Spain is to be met with in a hundred different authors. But had they given themſelves the trouble to reflect that the treaſures of America were the cement of the power of Charles V. and that by their means, Philip II. would have been maſter of Europe, if Henry the great, Elizabeth, and the princes of Orange, had not been heroes, thoſe authors would have been of a different way of thinking. It has been imagined that the Spaniſh monarchy has been in a manner annihilated, becauſe their kings Philip III. Philip IV. and Charles II. were either unfortunate or weak princes. But let us ſee how this monarchy has reſumed new life under cardinal Alberoni; let us caſt our eyes towards Africa and Italy, thoſe theatres of the conqueſts of the preſent Spaniſh government, and we ſhall be forced to own that nations are juſt what kings and miniſters make them. Courage, fortitude, induſtry, every talent remains buried, till ſome great genius appears, who rouſes and ſets them in motion. The capital is at preſent inhabited by Recollets, and chaplets are now deſtributed on the ſpot where vanquiſhed kings followed the chariot of Paulus Emilius. Let but an emperor take up his reſidence

at Rome, and let this emperor be a Julius Caeſar, every Roman will become a Caeſar with him.

As to the depopulation of Spain, it is not near ſo great as what is given out to be; and even after all, this kingdom, and the ſtates of America depending on it, are at this time ſo many provinces of the ſame empire, which is ſeparated by no longer a ſpace whan that may be ſailed over in two months. In a word, their treaſures become ours, by a neceſſary and unavoidable circulation. Their cochineal, their quinquina, their mines of Mexico and Peru, are ours, and by the ſame means our manufactures are Spaniſh. Had America been a burden to them, is it to be thought they would have perſiſted ſo long in denying admittance into that country to ſtrangers of every denomination? Do people preſerve with ſo much care the principle and ſource of one's ruin, after having two hundred years to conſider of it?

III. He ſays, that the loſs of their ſoldiers is not the moſt fatal conſequence in their wars; that an hundred thouſand men are a very ſmall number in compariſon to twenty millions; but that a new augmentation of taxes renders twenty millions of perſons miſerable. I will

grant him twenty millions of ſouls in France; but I will not likewiſe grant him, that it is better to have a hundred thouſand ſoldiers cut to pieces, than to put the reſt of the nation to an additional expence in taxes. This is not all; here is a ſtrange and fatal miſcalculation. Lewis XIV. had, reckoning the whole body of the marine, four hundred and forty thouſand men in pay during the war in 1701. The Roman empire never had ſuch a numerous army on foot. It has been obſerved, that about one fifth part of an army is deſtroyed by the end of a campaign, by diſeaſes, accidents, fire and ſword. Here then are eighty-eight thouſand men deſtroyed each year; therefore, at the expiration of ten years, the ſtate has loſt eight hundred and fourſcore thouſand men, and together with them all the children they would have procreated in that time. At preſent, if France contains about eighteen millions of ſouls, take away one half nearly for the women, together with all the old men, the children, the clergy, the monks, the magiſtrates, and thoſe who are neceſſary to carry on manufactures, and to till the ground, what number remains for the defence of the nation? In eighteen millions you will hardly find eighteen hundred thouſand men, and the war in ten

years is ſuppoſed to have deſtroyed near nine hundred thouſand. Thus the war deſtroys to a nation one half of all her men capable of bearing arms in her defence; and you ſay a new impoſt is more diſaſtrous to a nation than the death of ſo many of her beſt people.

After correcting theſe inadvertencies, which the author would have corrected himſelf, ſuffer me to have the pleaſure to conſider what he was advanced on freedom and commerce, on manufactures, on exchange, and chiefly with regard to luxury. This wiſe apology for luxury is by ſo much the more eſtimable in this author, and has ſo much the more force from his mouth, as his life was that of a philoſopher.

What then is luxury? It is a word without any preciſe idea *, much ſuch another expreſſion as when we ſay the eaſtern and weſtern hemiſphere: in fact, there is no ſuch thing as Eaſt and Weſt; there is no fixed point

* There is no occaſion to define luxury, it is ſo well underſtood; and notwithſtanding all that has been ſaid in defence of it, by different writers, it muſt be owned, that whatever tends to impair the health, and corrupt the morals of the people, is, on the whole, pernicious to the community. That luxury does both, no-body will deny.

where the earth riſes and ſets; or if you will, every point on it is at the ſame time eaſt and weſt. It is the ſame with regard to luxury; for either there is no ſuch thing, or elſe it is in all places alike. Lead us back to thoſe times when our grandfathers wore no ſhirts. Had any one told them, you muſt wear finer and lighter ſtuffs than the fineſt cloth, white as ſnow, and you ſhall ſhift them every day; and even after they are a little dirty, you muſt, with a compoſition prepared with great art, reſtore them to their former luſtre; every body would cry out, What luxury! what effeminacy! ſuch a magnificence as this is hardly ſufferable in a king. You want to corrupt our manners, and ruin the nation. Do they underſtand by luxury, the expence of an opulent perſon? Muſt he then live like the poor, he whoſe profuſion alone is ſufficient to maintain the poor? Expenſiveneſs ſhould be the thermometer of a private perſon's fortune, as general luxury is the infallible mark of a powerful and flouriſhing empire. It was under Charlemagne, Francis I. and under the miniſtry of the great Colbert, and the preſent adminiſtration, that men lived at the greateſt expence; that is to ſay, that the arts were encouraged and cultivated.

What would the tart, the ſatirical la Bruyere be at? What means this affected miſanthrope, by crying out, "Our anceſtors knew not what it was to prefer taſte to utility; they were never known to light themſelves with waxen tapers; this was a commodity reſerved for the altar, and the royal palace. They were never heard to ſay, Let my horſes be put to my coach: good pewter ſhone on their tables and ſide-boards; their ſilver was laid up in their coffers, etc." Is not this a very pleaſant elogium of our forefathers, to ſay they neither had taſte, induſtry, neatneſs, nor plenty? Their ſilver was laid up in their coffers. Were this really true, it was certainly the greateſt folly imaginable. Money is made for circulation, to bring the ſecrets of art to light, and to purchaſe the induſtry and labours of men: he who hoards it is a bad citizen, and even a bad oeconomiſt. It is by diſſipating it, we render ourſelves uſeful to our country and to ourſelves. Will men never grow weary of commending the follies of antiquity, with a view to ridicule the advantages of our own times?

This work of Melon has produced another by Mr. Dutot, which has much the preference, both in point of depth and juſtneſs of

reaſoning. This piece of Mr. Dutot is likely to give birth to another, which will probably carry the palm from both the others, as it is the production of a ſtateſman. Never was the ſtudy of the *Belles-letters* ſo cloſely connected with that of the revenues, which is an additional merit in the age in which we live.

ON

MONEY

AND THE

REVENUES of KINGS.

IT is well known that every change in the money in the laſt reign was both burdenſome to the people, and hurtful to the intereſt of the king. In theſe, therefore, is there no caſe in which an augmentation of the money may become neceſſary?

In a ſtate, for inſtance, that has but a ſmall ſhare of commerce, and as ſmall a ſhare of money (which has long been the caſe with France) a lord ſhall poſſeſs an eſtate of an hundred marks a year: he is forced to borrow, in order to marry his daughters, or to carry on a war, a thouſand marks, for which he is to pay fifty marks *per annum*. By this means his family is reduced to the annual ex-

pence of fifty marks for all charges. In the mean time the nation becomes more induſtrious, carries on a trade, ſo the money becomes more plenty. Then, as it never fails to happen, labour becomes dearer, ſo that the expence of luxuries, agreeable to the rank of this family, becomes double, treble, and even quadruple; whilſt the corn, which is the ſole reſource of the country, does not increaſe in the ſame proportion, becauſe people eat no greater quantity of bread than heretofore, though a great deal more is conſumed in magnificence. What was formerly bought with fifty marks, ſhall now coſt two hundred; ſo that the owner of land, who is now obliged to pay fifty marks of his annuity, is obliged to diſpoſe of his eſtate. What I now ſay of the lord, I ſay equally of the magiſtrate, the man of letters, etc. as of the labourer who buys his pewter diſhes, his ſilver cup, his bed, and his linen, ſo much the dearer. In a word, the higheſt perſonage in the land is in the ſame caſe, when his revenues are no more than fixed demeſnes, together with certain impoſts, which he is afraid to augment, for fear of exciting murmurs among his people. In this preſſing ſituation, there is certainly no more than the choice of one expedient left, which

is to eaſe the debtor. This may be done by aboliſhing his debts: this is the cuſtom practiſed by the Egyptians, with ſeveral other oriental nations, at the expiration of every fifty, and ſometimes every thirty years. This cuſtom was far from being ſo rigid as is imagined, the creditors having taken their meaſures accordingly, and a loſs which was diſcernable ſo long before-hand, can hardly be called a loſs. Although this law is not in force with us, it was however found neceſſary to have recourſe to it in effect, whatever round-about methods were uſed to avoid it. For what is it, when one falls on a method to pay only the fourth part of what he owes, but a kind of jubilee? This was very eaſily diſcovered, by giving coins an arbitrary value, and ſaying, this piece of gold, which was in value ſix livres, ſhall, from this day forward, be valued at four and twenty; and whoever ſhall owe four ſuch pieces of gold, under the title of ſix livres each, would pay his debt by paying only one piece of gold, which would be called four and twenty livres*.

* At the end of every ſeven years the legiſlature of England interpoſes for the relief of inſolvent debtors; a much better expedient than that of raiſing the value of the coin.

As theſe operations were performed by inſenſible degrees, no body was ſtartled at the change. One, who was both debtor and creditor, gained on one hand what he loſt on the other. Another carried on trade; and a third was a ſufferer, and was obliged to retrench.

In this manner have all the nations of Europe proceeded, before they had a regular and an extenſive commerce. Let us examine the conduct of the Romans, we ſhall find that the *As*, the pound of copper of twelve ounces, was reduced to ſix liards of our preſent money. Amongſt the Engliſh, the pound ſterling of ſixteen ounces of ſilver, is reduced to two and twenty livres of our money. The pound groſs among the Dutch is worth about twelve livres in accompts. But our livre is what has undergone the greateſt change of them all.

In the time of Charlemagne we called the current coin, equal in value to the twentieth part of a livre, a *ſolide*, from the Roman name of *ſolidum:* this *ſolid* is what we now call a *ſous*, in the ſame manner as we barbarouſly pronounce the month of Auguſt, *Aout*, which we very politely pronounce *Ou*; ſo that in our ſo exceeding polite language, *hodieque manent veſtigia ruris*. In ſhort, this *ſolide*, or *ſous*, which was the twentieth part of a livre,

and the tenth part of a mark of ſilver, is at this day no more than a penny piece of copper money, repreſenting the nineteen hundred and twentieth part of a livre, ſilver being ſuppoſed at forty-nine livres the mark. This calculation is almoſt incredible; and it is found by this very ſame calculation, that a family which formerly ſhould have had an hundred *ſolides* yearly rent, and who could have lived extremely well, would now have no more than five-ſixths of a crown of ſix livres to ſpend yearly.

What does all this prove? Why this; that of all nations we have always been the moſt given to change, though by no means the happieſt; that we have puſhed the abuſe of a law of nature, which requires the eaſing of debtors oppreſſed by the diminution of the value of money, to an enormous and moſt intolerable exceſs. Now ſince Mr. Dutot has ſo well expoſed the dangers of thoſe ſudden ſhocks which the change of the ſummary value of the coin occaſions, it is to be hoped that, in an age ſo enlightened as ours, we run no riſk of undergoing the like diſaſters.

What moſt ſurpriſed me in Mr. Dutot's work was to find him aſſerting that Lewis XII. Francis I. Henry II. and Henry III. were richer than Lewis XV. Who could have thought

that Henry III. at the preſent rate of computation, ſhould have one hundred and ſixty-three millions more revenue than our preſent king? I confeſs I have not yet been able to ſurmount my ſurprize. For how ſhould Henry III. if he was actually poſſeſſed of ſuch immenſe wealth, have found ſo much difficulty in oppoſing the Spaniards? How came he to be ſo oppreſſed by the Guiſes? How came France to loſe their manufactures? Whence is it, that no fine houſes were built, no royal palace erected, no taſte, nor the leaſt ſymptom of magnificence were then to be ſeen, thoſe never failing attendants of riches? Whereas at preſent three hundred fortreſſes always in thorough repair, which ſtrengthen and adorn our frontiers, and which are garriſoned with at leaſt two hundred thouſand men, are a certain proof of the ſuperiority of our wealth. The troops which compoſe the king's houſhold, may well enough be compared to the ten thouſand, covered with gold and ſilver, which attended on the chariot of Xerxes and Darius. Paris contains twice the number of people, and is an hundred times more opulent than under Henry III. Commerce, which, if we had then any at all, was in a moſt languiſhing and proſtrate condition, now flouriſhes at a great rate, to the vaſt emolument of the nation.

Since the laſt melting down of the coin, it has been found that upwards of twelve hundred millions in gold and ſilver paſſed through the mint. It is found, by the ſum of the ſtamp-duty on thoſe metals, that there is in France about an equal quantity of bullion in wrought plate. It is true, thoſe immenſe riches cannot be ſaid to leſſen the miſery of the people in a year of dearth. But this is not the ſubject of our preſent enquiry: the queſtion is, to know by what means, though the nation has become incomparably richer than in the preceding ages, the king has yet become actually poorer.

Let us firſt of all compare the riches of Lewis XV. with thoſe of Francis I. The public revenues then amounted to ſixteen millions of nominal livres, which livre was to the preſent as one is to four and a half. Therefore ſixteen millions of ſuch livres were equal in value to ſeventy-two millions of our livres: whence it follows, that with ſeventy-two millions only we ſhould be as rich as at that period. But the revenues of the ſtate * are ſuppoſed to a-

* This is the ſuppoſition of M. Dutot. But in 1750, the king's revenues amounted to near three hundred millions, at forty-nine livres ten ſous the mark.

mount to two hundred millions: therefore Lewis XV. is richer by one hundred and twenty eight millions than Francis I. ſo that this prince is three times richer than Francis I. and by conſequence draws three times the money from his people which Francis I. was able to do. This is very different from the calculation of M. Dutot.

He pretends, in order to prove his ſyſtem, that commodities are fifteen times dearer than in the ſixteenth century. Let us examine the price of commodities: we ſhall confine ourſelves to the price of corn at the capital, one year with another. I find many years in the ſixteenth century, in which corn was at fifty, five and twenty, twenty, and at eighteen ſous, and even at four livres, from whence I eſtimate the mean value at thirty ſous. Wheat is now worth twelve livres: therefore commodities have increaſed in the proportion of eight times their ancient value, which is the ſame proportion with that of the increaſe of their value in England and Germany. But thoſe thirty ſous, of the ſixteenth century, were worth five livres fifteen ſous of our preſent money. Now five livres fifteen ſous make, excepting only five ſous, one half of twelve livres: wherefore Lewis XV. actually is three

times richer than Francis I. as he pays no more than twice the ſum for commodities that was paid then. Now a perſon who has nine hundred livres, and who buys a commodity for ſix hundred livres, will certainly remain richer by an hundred crowns, than he who, being poſſeſſed of three hundred livres, buys the ſame commodity for three hundred livres: therefore Lewis XV. remains richer by one third.

But this is not all: inſtead of buying every thing at double the price, he purchaſes ſoldiers, the moſt neceſſary commodity of kings, at a much cheaper rate than any of his predeceſſors. Under Francis I. and Henry II. the ſtrength of our armies conſiſted in a national gendarmerie, and in foreign infantry, that cannot be compared in any reſpect to our preſent troops. But the infantry under Lewis XV. is paid nearly on the ſame footing, that is, at the ſame price of numerary livres, as under Henry IV. The ſoldier ſells his life and liberty at the rate of ſix ſous a day, including his clothing: theſe ſix ſous are equal to twelve in the time of Henry IV. ſo that with the ſame revenue with Henry the Great, we are able to maintain double the number of troops; and with double that ſum, we can maintain four times that number.

What I have ſaid in this place ſuffices to ſhew, that, notwithſtanding all the calculations of M. Dutot, our kings, as well as the ſtate, are richer than formerly. I will not however deny, that both are much deeper in debt.

Lewis XIV. left at his death upwards of twice ten hundred millions of debt, at thirty livres the mark, becauſe he would have, at the ſame time, five hundred thouſand men in arms, two hundred ſhips of war, and build Verſailles; and becauſe, in the war, on account of the Spaniſh ſucceſſion, his arms were long unproſperous; but the reſources of France by much exceed her debts. A ſtate which is indebted only to itſelf can never be impoveriſhed, and even debts are a new ſpur to induſtry.

ON

PRINTED LIES.

WE may at preſent divide the inhabitants of Europe into authors and readers, as they were for ſeven or eight ages divided into a ſet of barbarous tyrants with hawks on their fiſts, and ſlaves who were deſtitute of every neceſſary of life.

It is now about two hundred and fifty years ſince men, by degrees, began to conceive ſome notion they had ſuch a thing as a mind: now every perſon reads, either to cultivate or adorn his mind, or, at the leaſt, that he may be able to boaſt of his reading. As ſoon as the Dutch perceived this new want of the ſpecies, they became the factors of the commodity called Thought, as they had formerly been for our wines and ſalt: ſo that a bookſeller of Amſterdam, that could not read, gained a fortune of a million by the labours of a few Frenchmen, that took it into their heads to

become authors. These merchants informed themselves, by their correspondents, of the most marketable commodities; and according to the wants of the public, set their workmen to the writing histories or romances; but chiefly the former, because, after all, we cannot help believing there may be some small matter of truth in every thing that wears the title of a New History, Historical Memoirs, and Anecdotes, more than could well be expected from what passes under the denomination of a Romance. In this manner did the journeymen and labourers of those dealers in paper and ink compose the Memoires d'Artagnan, de Pontis, de Vordac, de Rochefort, with so many others, in which we find a very circumstantial account of all the secret thoughts of kings and prime ministers, together with an hundred thousand public transactions that were never heard of before. Your young German barons, your polish palatines, your dames of Stockholm and Copenhagen, read those books, and believe they are therefore informed of the most hidden secrets of the court of France.

Varillas was infinitely superior to the noble authors I am speaking of, though he frequently takes very unwarrantable liberties. He said, one day, to one who saw him somewhat puz-

zled, "I have three ſovereigns, whom I muſt engage in converſation together: now none of the three ever ſaw one another; and I cannot tell, for the ſoul of me, how to contrive to bring it to paſs." "So then, ſays the other, I ſuppoſe you muſt be writing ſome tragedy."

Every one has not been bleſſed with invention: therefore it is, that we find the fables of antiquity, which were formerly printed in *folio*, reprinted a ſecond time in *duodecimo*. I fancy one might diſcover, in upwards of two hundred authors, the ſame prodigies, and the ſame predictions, that were made in the time when aſtrology paſſed for a ſcience. We ſhall poſſibly be told again, how two Jews, whoſe only talents were ſelling of old cloths, and clipping of old coins, promiſed the empire to Leo the Iſaurian, and demanded of him, that he would throw down the images of the Chriſtians as ſoon as he ſhould be ſeated on the imperial throne; as if Jews cared much whether we had any images or no. I do not deſpair to ſee it printed a ſecond time, how Mahomet II. ſurnamed the Great, the moſt enlightened prince in his time, and the moſt magnificent encourager of the arts, ſpread fire and ſword through Conſtantinople (which, by the bye, he preſerved from pillage), demoliſhed

all the churches (of which he actually preſerved on half,) cauſed the patriarch to be impaled; he who paid more honour to the patriarch than had ever been ſhewn him by the Greek emperors; had the bellies of four pages ripped up, that he might diſcover which of them it was that had eaten a melon; and, laſtly, cut off his miſtreſs's head to pleaſe the Janiſaries. Theſe hiſtories, worthy only of Jack the Giant-killer, and of Blew beard, are ſold every day with approbation and privilege.

Some wiſer heads have bethought themſelves of another art of lying. They have made themſelves heirs to all the great miniſters, and have got poſſeſſion of all their teſtaments. We have ſeen the teſtaments of Colbert and de Louvois publiſhed as authentic pieces by refined politicians, who never once croſſed the threſhold of the offices of the ſecretary at war, or of the treaſury, in their lives. The teſtament of Cardinal Richelieu, written by a hand rather better than the reſt of them, has had a better fate, and the impoſture paſſed well enough for a conſiderable time. It is really pleaſant to ſee, in collections of harangues, what elogiums have been laviſhed on the admirable teſtament of that incomparable cardinal. In this piece we find his great depth of

genius; and a ſimpleton who had read it with a great deal of care, and had made a number of extracts from it, thought himſelf fit to govern the univerſe. The public has been as much impoſed upon by the teſtament of Charles V. duke of Lorrain: in this they diſcovered the vaſt penetration and the very ſpirit of that Prince; though they, who were in the ſecret, very plainly diſcovered the ſpirit of M. de Chevremont, who wrote it.

After theſe teſtament-writers came the authors of anecdotes. We have a ſmall hiſtory, printed in 1700, written by one mademoiſelle Durand, a perſon well acquainted with the facts ſhe related, under the tittle of "The Hiſtory of the Amours of Gregory VII. Cardinal Richlieu, the Princeſs of Conde, and the Marchioneſs d'Urfe." I have read, ſome years ſince, the Amours of the Rev. Father la Chaiſe, confeſſor to Lewis XIV.

A lady of great honour * a refugee at the Hague, compoſed, in the beginning of the preſent century, ſix large volumes of letters, between a lady of quality in the country, and a lady of quality in Paris, informing one another, very familiarly, of the news of the times. Now,

* Mrs. Du Noyer.

in theſe news of the times, I will venture to ſay there is not one piece of true intelligence. All the pretended adventures of the Chevalier de Bouillon, ſince known under the name of the Prince of Auvergne, are here related with all their circumſtances. I had one day the curioſity to aſk the Chevalier, whether there was any foundation for what Mrs. Du Noyer had placed to his account. He aſſured me, on his honour, the whole was nothing but a collection of falſhoods. This lady had gathered together all the ſilly ſtories current among the populace, which, in foreign parts, paſſed for the hiſtory of the court.

Sometimes the authors of ſuch hiſtories do more miſchief than they think of. A few years ago a perſon of my acquaintance, not knowing how to employ his time, printed a little book, in which he gave out that a certain celebrated perſonage had lately periſhed by a moſt horrible aſſaſſination. I myſelf was an evidence of the contrary: I repreſented to the author how, by all laws divine and human, he was under an obligation to retract this falſhood, which he accordingly promiſed he would: yet the effect of his piece ſtill remains, and I have ſeen this calumny repeated in ſome of the pretended hiſtories of the age.

There has lately appeared a political work at London, the city, of all the cities in the univerſe, where the falſeſt news are publiſhed, with the falſeſt reaſonings upon thoſe falſities. "Every body knows, ſays the author, (p. 17) that the emperor Charles VI. died of poiſon given him in *aqua taffana*: we know his favourite page was a Spaniard, to whom he left a legacy by his will, and who gave him the poiſon. The magiſtrates of Millan, who took the depoſition of this page a little before his death, and ſent it to Vienna, might tell us, if they pleaſed, who his inſtigators and accomplices were; and I could be glad the court of Vienna would, as ſoon as poſſible, inform the public of the circumſtances of this horrible crime." I fancy the court of Vienna will cauſe them to wait a long while for the information they want, in regard to this chimera.

Theſe calumnies, which are perpetually renewing, often put me in mind of the following verſes:

Les oiſifs courtiſans, que leurs chagrins dévorent,
S'efforcent d'obſcurir les aſtres qu'ils adorent;
Si l'on croit de leurs yeux le regard penetrant,
Tout miniſtre eſt un traitre & tout prince un tyrant;
L'hymen n'eſt entoure que de feux adulteres;
Le frere a ſes rivaux eſt vendu par ſes freres;

Et ſi tot qu'un grand roi panche vers ſon declin,
Ou ſon fils ou ſa femme ont hate ſon deſtin. . .
Qui croit toujours le crime en parait trop capable.

The courtly fry, from diſappointment ſore,
With ſlander blacken what they ſhould adore.
Truſt their remarks, they'll prove it clear as day,
All kings oppreſs, all miniſters betray.
Adult'rous fires ſurround the marriage-bed;
The brother's blood the brother's hand hath ſhed.
Should ſome great monarch touch the goal of life,
His fate is haſten'd by his ſon or wife.
Of guilt that man too capable appears,
Who credits thus each horrid tale he hears.

In this manner have the pretended hiſtories of the age generally been written.

The war of 1702, and that of 1741, have produced as many lies in books, as they killed ſoldiers in their campaigns: they have told a hundred times over, and they tell it ſtill, that the miniſtry of Verſailles forged the teſtament of Charles II. king of Spain. Some anecdotes tell us, that the laſt marechal de la Feuillade failed in the attempt on Turin, and ſacrificed his reputation, his fortune, and his army, purpoſely, and by a capital ſtroke of politics. Others of them aſſure us, that a certain miniſter

was the cauſe of the loſs of a battle, by a like ſtroke of politics. They have lately reprinted in the Tranſactions of Europe, that at the battle of Fontenoy we loaded our cannon with pieces of glaſs and poiſoned ſhot; that general Campbell was killed by one of thoſe poiſoned bullets; upon which the duke of Cumberland ſent the king of France a box, in which were contained the glaſs and metals extracted from his wound; that in this box was incloſed a letter, in which he tells the king that the moſt barbarous nations had never made uſe of ſuch weapons, and that the king was highly diſpleaſed on reading this letter. There is not the leaſt ſhadow of truth or probability in this account. To theſe abſurd lies they add, that we murdered the wounded Engliſh that remained on the field of battle in cold blood; though it ſtands proved, by the regiſters of our hoſpitals, that we took the ſame care of them as of our own ſoldiers.

How numerous are the ſecret memoirs, hiſtories, of campaigns, and journals of all kinds! the prefaces to which promiſe the utmoſt impartiality, and the moſt exact information. If you viſit one of theſe great politicians, you will find a poor ſcribe in a banian and night-cape, without fire or furniture, compiling or

cobbling of news-papers. Sometimes theſe gentlemen will take a power under their protection. The ſtory of one of theſe writers is well known, who had a reward of the emperor Leopold, at the cloſe of the laſt war, for having kept him an army of fifty thouſand men on the Lower Rhine for five years running. They will alſo ſometimes declare war, and commit acts of hoſtility; though they run the riſk of being treated as enemies. One of them, called Dubourg, who kept his office in Frankfort, was unluckily arreſted there by an officer of our army in 1748, and conducted to Mount St. Michael in a cage: and yet this example is far from cooling the courage of his magnanimous brethren.

One of the moſt noble and moſt common tricks of this kind, is that of thoſe writers who transform themſelves into miniſters of ſtate, and lords belonging to the courts of the country they ſpeak of. We have been favoured with a voluminous hiſtory of Lewis XIV. compiled from the memoirs of a miniſter of ſtate. This miniſter was a Jeſuit, who had been expelled his order, and had taken ſanctuary in Holland, under the name of de la Stode, and who afterwards thought proper to

create himſelf ſecretary of ſtate for France in Holland for bread.

As it is always fitting to imitate good models, and as my lord chancellor Clarendon and the cardinal de Retz have drawn portraits of the principal perſonages they treat of, we ought by no means to wonder that the writers of our own times ſhould, on hiring themſelves to a book-ſeller, begin with very long and faithful portraits of the princes of Europe, and even the miniſters and generals, though they have never ſo much as ſeen a lacquey who wore their livery. An Engliſh author, in the Annals of Europe, printed and reprinted, aſſures us, that Lewis XV. has nothing of that grandeur in his air and gait which ſpeaks the king. This perſon muſt undoubtedly be very difficult and nice, with regard to phyſiognomies. But, to make amends, he tells us, that cardinal Fleury had an air of noble confidence. He is full as exact in regard to characters and facts as he is to perſons: he informs Europe, that cardinal Fleury gave up his title of prime miniſter (which he never had) in favour of the count de Thoulouſe. He acquaints us, that the army of marechal Maillebois was ſent into Bohemia, only becauſe a young lady of the court had left a letter on the table, which letter

gave information of the ſituation of affairs: he ſays the count d'Argenſon ſucceeded as miniſter at war, in the room of M. Amelot. I fancy, if one were willing to make a collection of all the books written in this manner, in order to become a little acquainted with the anecdotes of Europe, one might make an immenſe library, without ten pages of truth in the whole collection.

Another conſiderable article in this trade of printed paper is in theſe books called polemical, by way of excellence; that is to ſay, thoſe in which one ſlanders his neighbours to get money. I do not ſpeak of the functions of advocates, who enjoy the noble privilege of beſpattering the adverſe party at pleaſure, and defaming families according to ſtatute. I ſpeak of thoſe who in England, for example, excited by an ardent love of their country, write Philippics, worthy of Demoſthenes, againſt the miniſter, in their garrets. Theſe pieces are ſold for two-pence a ſheet: ſometimes they will print you four thouſand copies, which is enough to keep one of thoſe eloquent citizens alive for a month or two. I have heard Sir Robert Walpole ſay, that one day one of theſe Demoſthenes's, who ſell their works at two pence a ſheet, having as yet declared himſelf

of no party in the parliamentary diſſentions, came to make an offer of his pen to knock down all his enemies. The miniſter very civilly thanked him for his kind offer, and excuſed himſelf from accepting his ſervice. "You will not be offended then, anſwered the writer, if I make your antagoniſt Mr. Pulteney a tender of my aſſiſtance?" So away he hies to him, and he met with much ſuch another reception. He declared openly againſt both; ſo that on Monday he wrote againſt Mr. Walpole, and on the Wedneſday againſt Mr. Pulteney. But after getting a very honourable ſubſiſtence by it for a matter of two months, he concluded with aſking charity at their doors.

The celebrated Pope was in his time treated exactly like a miniſter: his reputation made many men of letters imagine ſomething might be got by him. For the honour of learning, and in order to advance the progreſs of the human mind, they printed againſt him above an hundred libels, in which they prove him to be an atheiſt; and, what is yet worſe in England, they reproach him for being a catholic. They affirmed, on his publiſhing his tranſlation of Homer, that he did not underſtand Greek, becauſe he was crooked and had an ill ſmell.

It is true he was crooked; but this was no reaſon why he might not be a very good Greek ſcholar, and his tranſlation of Homer a very noble one. They impeached his morals, his education, his birth; they attacked his father and mother. Theſe libels had no end. Pope had ſometimes the weakneſs to anſwer them, which thickened the cloud of libels. At length he determined to be at the trouble to print a ſmall compendium of all thoſe excellent pieces. This was a mortal blow to theſe writers, who till then had lived very decently on the ſlanders they vented againſt him: they were now no longer read, and were ſilenced by the abrigement. They never recovered this ſtroke after.

I was ſtrongly tempted to grow vain, on finding that our great writers dealt with me in the ſame manner as thoſe gentry had uſed Pope. I may ſafely ſay, I have been of ſome lettle ſervice to more than one author. I had, I forget how, done ſome little ſervice to the illuſtrious abbe de Fontaines. But as this ſervice was not ſufficient to maintain him, the firſt thing he thought of, in order to get rid of his difficulties, on coming out of the jail from whence I delivered him, was the publiſhing a dozen libels againſt me, which, in truth, he compoſed

wholly out of his regard for the honour of letters, and from the overflowing of his zeal for good taſte. He printed an edition of the Henriade, in which he had foiſted ſome verſes of his own compoſing, and then, criticiſed thoſe very verſes he had made himſelf. I have carefully preſerved a letter wrote me upon a time by an author of this ſtamp: "Sir, I have printed a libel againſt you: there are four hundred copies in the impreſſion; now, if you will ſend me four hundred livres, I will ſend you every copy of the work, upon my honour." I wrote him an anſwer, that I ſhould be very far from abuſing his goodneſs; that this would by no means be an advantageous bargain for him; and that the ſale of his work muſt certainly be of much more ſervice to him. I had no cauſe to repent of my generoſity.

It is a good-natured action to encourage men of letters who are unknown, and who know not what ſubject to begin with. One of the greateſt pieces of charity that can be done them, is to give the public a tragedy. The moment you do this, all of a ſudden come out "Letters to Ladies of Quality, an impartial Criticiſm of the new Play, a Letter from a Friend in Town to his Friend in the Country, a ſerious and mature Examination, the

new Tragedy taken to pieces and examined ſcene by ſcene;" every one of which is greedily bought up, which is the point aimed at.

But the moſt curious ſecret of all, for an honeſt bookſeller, is to take care to print, at the end of the book he publiſhes, all the abuſe and ribaldry that has been written againſt the author. Nothing is better calculated to whet the curioſity of the reader, and to quicken the ſale. I remember, among the execrable editions that have been printed in Holland of my pretended works, an artful editor in Amſterdam, who was deſirous to ſink the credit of an impreſſion printed at the Hague, thought proper to add, by way of appendix, a collection of all the ribaldry he could ſcrape together that had been written againſt me. The firſt words of his collection called me a ſnarling cur. I found this book at Magdebourg, in the hands of the poſt-maſter, who never ceaſed telling me what an eloquent piece it was. Lately two worthy bookſellers at Amſterdam, after having disfigured, as much as in them lay, the Henriade, and my other pieces, did me the honour to acquaint me by letter, that if I perſiſted in my intention of permitting a better edition of my works to be publiſhed at Dreſden, than that which they were then en-

gaged in, they ſhould hold themſelves bound in conſcience to publiſh againſt me a volume of the moſt atrocious calumnies, on the fineſt writing paper, with a large margin, and the moſt beautiful letter they could procure. They have now been as good as their word with me. It is pity ſuch valuable collections ſhould have been buried in oblivion. Formerly, when there were eight or nine hundred thouſand volumes fewer in Europe than at preſent, thoſe pieces of ſcandal had their effect. People read with extreme reliſh in Scaliger, that cardinal Bellarmin was an atheiſt, the reverend Clavius a drunkard, and that the reverend father Cotton had ſold himſelf to the devil. Theſe were happy days; but alas! every thing degenerates.

THE END.